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	Business Manager Advertising Manager Designer American Distributor Communications to	Jean Berkmann Arthur Boyars Derek Birdsall B de Boer, 188 High Street, Nutley, New Jersey 07110, USA New Left Review, 7 Carlisle Street, London WIV 6NL
		Telephone 01-734 8839
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In August 1977, the most original and substantive work of political theory to ave been produced in Eastern Europe in the thirty years that have passed since the post-war overthrow of capitalism was published in West Germany: Rudolf Bahro's 'The Alternative-Contribution to a Critique of Socialism as it actually Exists'. The reaction of the East German authorities was immediate: Bahro was arrested as an 'imperialist spy'. He is now in gaol awaiting trial. The text by Bahro translated here was originally intended as a course of lectures introducing the main themes of his explosive book. Bahro's analysis is theoretically novel, yet rooted in classical Marxism. In formal political terms, Bahro identifies himself with post-1948 Yugoslavia, the Prague Spring, the Medvedev brothers, and Eurocommunism. But both his political economy of the bureaucratized workers' states—the first sustained attempt from within one of these to analyse them in scientific terms, at least since the twenties in Russia—and his intransigent call for new forms of open political organization, a new 'league of communists', mark him off as a profoundly independent and radical thinker.

Four years ago, in NLR 79, we published a study by Gareth Stedman Jones of the attempt by the later Engels to systematize a general philosophy of dialectical materialism, by a new usage of the heritage of Hegel, with all the ambiguities and contradictions this involved. Now, in a complementary yet in some ways also contrasting essay, Stedman Jones assesses the originality of Engels's contribution to the genesis of historical materialism, through a careful examination of his writings in the middle 1840s, prior to he Communist Manifesto. Rejecting the twin stereotypes of Engels the mere faithful collaborator with Marx, and Engels the mechanistic rulgarizer and distorter of the 'real' dialectical Marx, he brings out the true

luring this period, and shows how both were essential to the foundation of new science. His essay will form part of an important new multi-volume. History of Marxism', to be published by Einaudi next year.

n the penultimate issue of the Review, we published a critical text from within the broad framework of Eurocommunism, in the form of Louis Althusser's comments on the Twenty-second Congress of the PCF. Here, by contrast, we present the positions of the first and most lucid of all exponents of Eurocommunism, Giorgio Amendola. In a discussion with he French Trotskyist Henri Weber, whose interview with Ernest Mandel we published in NLR 100, Amendola frankly and robustly sets out his riews of the nature of Christian Democracy in Italy, the historic compromise, the possibility of socialism in the seventies, and the programme of reforms that the PCI pose as their immediate target. In mother text, the Spanish writer Fernando Claudin-whose new book Eurocommunism and Socialism' will shortly be published by NLB races the debate between Lenin and Kautsky after the October Revolution. Claudin shows the damning record of all attempts since that time to follow Kautsky's prescriptions for the accomplishment of socialism. Yet he also ocates a key weakness in Lenin's stance: his failure to give adequate veight to the question of proletarian democracy and the fate of the soviet: While currents in the Western Communist Parties become increasingly willing to evoke the ideas of Kautsky with some benevolence, the need for a oberly critical assessment of Lenin's achievement becomes all the more. mportant for those who seek to defend it.

Finally, Valentino Gerratana writes a pungent commentary on current efforts—probably most frequent in Italy or the USA—to reconcile the philosophy of Martin Heidegger with that of Marx.

The Alternative in Eastern Europe

I would like to start by discussing my book's point of departure and purpose. Its original title was 'A Contribution to the Critique of Socialism as it Actually Exists'—perhaps somewhat old-fashioned. Now this is simply the subtitle. It is deliberately reminiscent of Marx's celebrated analysis of social formations, particularly the 1859 preliminary study for Capital which he called 'A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy'. For a period of some ten years, I have devoted practically the whole of my free time to analysing this actually existing socialism as a social formation of its own type. The result so far may not yet have the same degree of completeness that Marx was to achieve in his critique of bourgeois society. Yet the text must now reach the public—and naturally enough not just outside Eastern Europe, but even in the German Democratic Republic itself, difficult as it is to distribute it here. Moreover, I had decided right from the start that it should appear under my own name. A direct challenge, and this is the aim of my book, is incompatible with fear, not simply in the moral sense, but politically too.*

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The revolutionary process since 1917 has led to a quite different social order than its pioneers anticipated. This is familiar enough to all who live under this new order. If our conditions are officially depicted in terms of the traditional Marxist categories, this has long since been conscious hypocrisy, the deliberate production of false consciousness. My critique of actually existing socialism is directed at founding a radical communistalternative, i.e. one that gets down to the economic roots, to the politburocratic dictatorship which keeps our society's labour, and its whole social life, in chains. I put forward programmatic proposals for the new League of Communists that I am convinced must be built up on all fronts to prepare and lead the breakthrough from 'actually existing' socialism to genuine socialism. As I see it, there is no other perspective than a socialist or communist one. And since this kind of alternative does not bear simply on some particulars, but rather involves the revolutionizing of the whole social framework, in fact the dissolution of a social formation, it must at least be outlined in its full complexity, even if it cannot yet be completely detailed.

The socialism which Marx and Engels foresaw, and which Lenin and hiscomrades undoubtedly hoped for also in Russia, will come. It must be the goal of our struggle, as it is more than ever the sole alternative to a global catastrophe for civilization. But nowhere in the world have there yet been more than the first attempts in this direction, for instance in Yugoslavia. In the other East European countries there is not even this. What Marx understood by socialism and communism is not very familiar to present-day communists, even to those who genuinely are such. But it is evident enough that Soviet and East European society is incompatible with the goals set by Marxism. Socialism as it actually exists, irrespective of its many achievements, is characterized by: the persistence of wagelabour, commodity production and money; the rationalization of the traditional division of labour; a cultivation of social inequalities that extends far beyond the range of money incomes; official corporations for the ordering and tutelage of the population; liquidation of the freedoms conquered by the masses in the bourgeois era, instead of the preservation and realization of these freedoms (only consider the all-embracing censorship, and the pronounced formality and factual unreality of socalled socialist democracy). It is also characterized by: a staff of functionaries, a standing army and police, which are all responsible only to those above them; the duplication of the unwieldy state machine into a state and a party apparatus; its isolation within national frontiers. Let us confine ourselves for the time being to this list. Its elements are familiar enough. What is not so well known is their internal and historically conditioned interconnection. But more on that later.

In the more developed countries, in particular, a system with features such as these brings the masses too little real progress towards freedom. What it provides above all is a different dependence from the old

^{*} This presentation of Rudolf Bahro's Die Alternative: zer Kritik der realizationsaden Seguntumen, Frankfurt 1977, was originally devised by the author as a series of aix 'lectures' to introduce the main themes of his book

acquired an added layer; they persist at a new level. And in as much apositive achievements of the preceding epochs have been lost at route this new dependence is in many respects more oppressive than the old This social order has no prospect of winning people to it, in its present political constitution. Given the total concentration of social power, the insignificance of the individual comes still more visibly and universally to the fore here than it does in the play of accidents and probabilities of the kaleidoscopic surface of the capitalist reproduction process.

The colossus that we know as 'party and government', which of course includes the trade unions, etc., 'represents' the free association aspired to by the classical exponents of socialism in the same way as the state represented society in all earlier civilizations. We have the kind of state machine Marx and Engels sought to smash by proletarian revolution and which was not to be allowed to reemerge in any form or on any pretext. This is irrefutably clear from their own writings, particularly those on the Paris Commune. The state, in their eyes—and these are the original expressions—is a parasitic excrescence, a monster, a boa constrictor which entoils the living society, a supernaturalist abortion, s horrid machinery of class domination. All of this and more, Already in The German Ideology of 1845-6, Marx had written that 'The proletarians if they are to assert themselves as individuals . . . must overthrow the state'. In his writings on the Commune, Marx anticipated something else that we can see all around us today. 'Every minor solitary interess engendered by the relations of social groups [is] separated from society itself . . . and opposed to it in the form of state interest, administered by state priests with exactly determined hierarchical functions."2 Marx and Engels certainly did not imagine a socialism like this. In Yugoslavia, in particular, where the League of Communists has not reconciled itself to this phenomenon, the expression 'étatism' (from the French état = state) has been used as a shorthand term for the principle of bureaucraticcentralist dictatorship.

Defining the Post-capitalist Societies

In seeking to call the prevailing social relations by their proper name, therefore, I could not use the concept of 'socialism'. On the other hand, the concept of étatism seemed too narrow, though it does correctly point to one particular aspect. I hesitated for a long while on the label. Yet the system's own self-description as 'actually existing socialism', reluctantly reproduced here, at least admits indirectly that there is a difference between the socialist tradition as ostensibly still maintained, and the actuality of the new society. So in the end I accepted this formula, and even abandoned the apostrophes, with the intention of elaborating this difference all the more unmistakeably.

This is in no way a charge of departure from some kind of sacred principles. The only purpose of polemic here is to dismantle false

¹ Collected Works (English edition), Volume 5, p 80

² 'First Draft of The Civel War in France', in The First International and After, Pelican Mars. Library, 1974, p. 247.

Marxists to abandon all theories of 'deformation', and call a halt to the old anger about the distortion and 'betrayal' of socialism, understandable as this at one time was. If the historical drama is reduced to a problem of poor realization, then one is proceeding from unreal assumptions and theory is led astray. Certainly, we can confront the practice of actually existing socialism with the classical theory, and must do so, in order to preserve—in the face of this practice—the substance of the socialist idea. But this practice must be explained on the basis of its own laws. For it is very far from arbitrarily produced, or 'permitted' by some weakness. I has completely different foundations to those originally conceived. And so it does not require justification, apology or embellishment, but rather truthful description and analysis.

I would like briefly to characterize the basic position by which I have been guided on this question. Incontestably, the revolution has generally brought the peoples involved considerable progress, both materially and in terms of mass culture. In many cases it has protected or reestablished their national existence and character against the dissolving and destructive influence of capitalist industrialism. We can say with certainty that this process as now taking place in Asia and Africa, where it is far more appropriate, corresponds to a basic historical necessity. But communists must know that what they are participating in there does not have a socialist or communist perspective; not a perspective of general emancipation. The new order may call itself proto-socialist, i.e. socialism in embryo, the preparation for socialism, but in just the same sense, if not with the same emphases, late capitalism too has been seen as proto-socialist, as socialism in embryo, the preparation for socialism. And in so far as communists in such a society exert their influence in favour of the established power, and do not struggle to overcome the existing conditions, they must be aware that they are taking part in another rule of man over man, another system of oppression and exploitation—yes, exploitation. The functionary of 'actual socialism' the boss, the nachalask, and moreover not just in the shape of the high politburocratic dignitary, but even the normal party, state and economic functionary—represents, often against his will, the most recent type of this gentleman. I have myself played and experienced this role for long enough.

The established apparatus identifies its rule, seemingly accredited by history, with the Marxist idea, the idea of communism. In this way, it simply makes all the old socialist aspirations a joke for the masses. From the Elbe to the Amur, it daily feeds the desire for the restoration of at least some of the old conditions. It is characteristic of the rapid ideological decay in the East European countries since the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 that the greater part of the opposition elements now find themselves thrown back to purely liberal-democratic demands, to a campaign for human rights—a position, in other words, that is not just the broadest but also the flattest, the most unconstructive, so far as its content goes. The violations that are justifiably attacked can disappear only with the political superstructure that has need of them. It remains, of course, a disgrace into which the régime has led our whole society, that the most prominent section of the domestic opposition

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rights and political democracy—yes, indeed! But what is tacking in the East European countries, and not least in the Soviet Union itself, is the organized and long-term struggle for a different overall policy. It is this struggle above all for which we must prepare, first and foremost by a broad educational movement to spread understanding of the context ir which present relations arose, and of their inner logic, as a precondition to overcoming them.

At the moment, we generally lack the kind of understanding for the overall historical movement which Marx and Engels worked for in their day. One major cause of this consists in the failure to master the experience of the Russian revolution and its consequences. It is this disturbing loss of perspective, and not simply the threat of suppression, that explains the spread of pessimistic and defeatist moods even among those who are potential candidates for a revolutionary communist opposition. Communists must bear in mind that they have inherited the most developed theory and method of social knowledge, which has already been worked out and tested. It still remains the appropriate instrument for discovering the alternative point of departure in the present reality itself.

For a Cultural Revolution

Socialism once meant the promise to create a new and higher civilization, to solve the basic problems of mankind in such a way that the individual would be at the same time both satisfied and liberated. When the movement first took shape it spoke of general human liberation, and not just of this moderate welfare, devoid of prospects, in which we vainly seek to outbid late capitalism. Up to now, however, it seems that communists have only come to power in order to continue the old civilization at an accelerated tempo. In the most comprehensive sense of the term—nopiust a political sense, but a cultural one—the countries of actual socialism are compulsively, as it were, 'following the capitalist road'. Preeminently reactive in its approach, what passes for socialist construction is insufficiently distinctive—in its capacity as a non-capitalist road—so far as the mode of human life, the existential problems of individuals, are concerned.

In competing for a higher level of commodity output and productivity, we bend all our efforts to making our own those evils which we once intended to avoid at all costs. It is never permissible to point out publicly that the growth dynamic typical of capitalism, which determines our economic and social planning, is in the process of becoming economically, politically and psychologically untenable, within a relatively brief historical period. People's thoughts are systematically provincialized and thrown one-sidedly back on private needs, and this at a time when the mobilization of reason and understanding is extremely urgent. The environmental and resource problems of today are the result of not more than 200 years of industrial progress undertaken by a small fraction of humanity. When made universal, and extended into the future, this model is a sure route to catastrophe. The tempo at which the world is changing should be a cause for dismay rather than enthusiasm, so long as the overall process still runs its course spontaneously, in patterns that no

socialism forms part of this flow, deliberately so in detail, blindly so on the large scale.

The communist alternative, therefore, must not be restricted to an appeal to immediate needs, nor to the understandable resentments to which the phenomenal forms of our political conditions give rise. The dissolution of the politburocratic dictatorship has a much deeper necessity. The ruling political interests prevent the population of our countries from progressively taking a stand on the problems that are raised by the present world situation. Individually, many people suspect that the idea of progress must be conceived quite differently from how it customarily has been. But their alienated social conditions, which have led to mechanically and irrationally functioning institutions, prevent them from living according to their better understanding, which in turn means they are quite unable to develop this understanding to the full.

My draft outline is directed not at a sect of crypto-communists, but at all those, irrespective of their official position and former official appearance, who hope for an emancipation in our countries from the modern slavery to material things and to the state. The communist perspective, and this is how one must envisage also the new league of communists, is not a party monopoly, not even the monopoly of some kind of closed political school defined by a particular world outlook. On the contrary. As can readily be seen, the dynamic of social development is gradually shifting from material expansion to the development of human subjectivity; in other words, from the great needs to have and display, it is shifting to a life for deeper human knowledge, feeling and being. From this arises the possibility for a grand alliance of all those forces and tendencies that would like to lead men out of their imprisonment by material compulsions they themselves have created.

The new political and social revolution now necessarily affects the deepest layers of our civilization. What I have in mind here is a cultural / revolution in the broadest sense of the term, a revolution—if essentially non-violent—in the entire subjective form of mass life. This must, of course, come about as much by the conscious will of individuals as by their unconscious feelings. Its aim is really to create the social framework for the free development of each person, which according to the Communist Manifesto is the precondition for the free development of all. Communism cannot advance in any other way than by proving itself in relation to man, to his visible and perceptible climb towards freedom, and this means, above everything external, also inward freedom. Here history faces us with an inescapable demand. Our civilization has reached a limit of extension at which the inner freedom of the individual appears as the very condition for survival. This inner freedom is the precondition for a collective renunciation, based on understanding, of a continued material expansion which is both disastrous and subjectively purposeless. General emancipation is becoming an absolute historical necessity.

Non-capitalist Industrialization

Proclaiming the freedom of the individual as an absolute necessity, the

Such a short cut must be avoided. The alternative can only be based on a critique that is focussed on uncovering and understanding the presentarriers to emancipation, the causes of unfreedom. This understanding can only be obtained from history. The first question is how this actually existing socialism has come about. For Marx, and thus originally also for Lenin, communism was to proceed from the abolition of capitalist private property in its most developed form. It was to come into being by the positive appropriation of the social wealth produced under the rule of capital. And the revolution required for this was to be the simultaneous act of the most advanced nations.

Did the Russian revolution fit into this perspective? Was the old Russian Empire, which was to merge into the Soviet Union, a capitalist country at all, even an undeveloped one? In 1881, Marx and Engels still did not see it as even feudal. In their view it was semi-Asiatic, and this was no geographical characteristic, but a precise concept of political economy. For Russia, therefore, the abolition of capitalist private property could not have a great positive significance, since there was little capitalist private property there, and economic life was affected by it only at certain points. The tragedy of the Russian socialist vanguard was that they found a different task to fulfil in practice from that which the influence of their West European models had suggested to them. The October Revolution was to introduce a completely different process from the socialist revolution anticipated in Western Europe.

The path that Russia pioneered in 1917, under the added burden of the World War, was evidently induced far more by the external contradictions of world imperialism than by capitalism's 'normal' internal contradictions. Since modern capitalism disrupted the traditional way of life of all peoples who had a different social organization, with its technical and economic expansion and with the by-products of its civilization, it compelled them to attempt to reform their social and economic life in new ways. Where their strength was sufficient, and the world-political conjuncture permitted, they won back their autonomy from capitalism by this means. This is the phenomenon of the non-capitalist road to industrial society, which I investigate in the first part of my book. It is not by chance that this road has been pursued with particular success where the vanguard has organized itself according to the principles that Stalin canonized as Marxism-Leninism.

The East European countries in general, and Czechoslovakia and the GDR in particular, are of course not characteristic of this non-capitalist road, though they have travelled it since 1945. Actually existing socialism is the arrangement under which countries with a pre-capitalist formation work independently to produce the preconditions of socialism, and it is the pressure of the industrial productive forces created by capitalism that gives this process its decisive impulse. In Asia and Africa, as well as in those countries of Latin America where there is still a significant Indian

³ Bahro is apparently referring here to Marx's 'Drafts for a Letter to Vera Zasulich'

of production that capitalist colonization met with. It is clear enough, then, that the new organization cannot be a transition period between capitalism and communism, even though in the ideal case it actually does bypass capitalism. Its place in history is determined by the way that, just like capitalism, it brings the productive forces to the threshold of socialist restructuring, but in a completely different manner so far as the social formation is concerned.

This is the reason why all criticism that seeks to equate the economic essence of actually existing socialism with state capitalism, by virtue of certain analogies, completely misfires. Undoubtedly, state centralization plays a decisive role in our society, and it is evident enough that the conditions of production do not thereby become the property of the people. Nationalization, and not socialization, is in fact the decisive feature. But this no more points to state capitalism than did the granaries of the Pharaohs. The reason for mentioning ancient Egypt here is that the phenomenon of the non-capitalist road has both its historical and its logical roots there, where class society began by and large as an economic despotism.

Historically, the state as a corporate apparatus is the original expropriator of society. Today it is the final instance that keeps society from its property, even after private ownership has gone. This tendency, by the way, is displayed also in late capitalism. For the political organization of the non-capitalist countries, it means the transition from a stagnant agricultural despotism to a dynamic despotism of industrialization. At the head of the apparatus-state it created, Lenin's Bolshevik Party in Russia was to a large extent the extraordinary representative of the expelled capitalist exploiting class (without, however, taking the place of this class), which had not been deeply rooted enough in the economic life of a gigantic peasant country that was still primarily semi-Asiatic.

To call the new social order and its superstructure socialist or communist is a monstrous misconception. It was from its very beginnings not a system of real freedom and equality, nor could it have been. It regularly and inevitably reproduces precisely those barriers that block the way to the free development of self-conscious subjectivity and individual autonomy. It precisely embodies all the structural conditions of individual subalternity. This is its regular dilemma, for subalternity, in other words the mentality and behaviour of dependent 'little people' alienated from the overall totality, cannot be overcome within this structure, but rather only by its dissolution.

The Problem of Subalternity

The entire second part of my book pursues the question of on what general basis the rule of man over man persists in our society, and how our socio-economic structure concretely functions so as to give rise to this oppressive socio-psychological effect. The problem of subalternity is the cornerstone of my alternative conception. For as regards the practical political perspective of the barriers to be attacked, the movement of general emancipation today has precisely the task of liquidating those

instead of free people.

The concept of subalternity refers to an objective structure that produces this mentality on a massive scale, and which moreover also possesses the power of organizing inwardly free men as subalterns in a formal sense and treating them as such. First of all, a subaltern is simply someone placed under someone else in rank, who cannot act independently or make independent decisions beyond a certain sphere of competence defined from above. He is the foundation stone of every hierarchy. If, however, this role defines the total social behaviour of those subjected to it, if their entire life process runs its course principally under the sign of some subordinate partial functions for an uncontrollable totality, then this subalternity is no longer simply a property of the subordinate function, but becomes a property of the individual charged with its execution. It now dominates subjective behaviour, automatically bringing with it incapacity to be responsible for the more general context. All class society, every relationship of domination, produces subalternity. But no other class society since the Asiatic mode of production has fundamentally subalternized the great mass of its free members in such a through-going way as actually existing socialism. It is subalternity as a system, and -as Andreas Hegedüs already established several years ago-accordingly also a system of organized irresponsibility.

To what can this fact be attributed? To clarify this, I analyse in detail:

1. the hierarchical organization of labour in non-capitalist industrial society, which reproduces the despotism of the factory on an overall social scale, and extends its rules to all branches of social activity; 2. its social structure and the mechanism of stratification, which is bound up with the subordination of men according to various functional levels of labour, and in a hierarchy of competence as regards management; 3. the pronounced powerlessness of the immediate producers, to whom the concept of a working class is no longer applicable; and 4. the inhibitions on the motive forces of society that the system produces.

Since imaginative literature can yield sociological information where official social science dissembles or keeps quiet, I have amplified on the subjective effects proceeding from this situation with a digression on Soviet literature of the 1960s. Many books bear witness to the unproductive character of government regimentation, in the context of the present-day level of development of the productive forces. They denounce the restrictions on initiative and the decay of individuality caused by the all-embracing authoritarianism. And they disclose, which is also very important, the patriarchal bedrock of the most up-to-date relations of domination.

The factors listed above, however, are simply the most visible and superficial causes of the subaltern phenomenon. We may indeed recognize this for what it is. But can it be changed? By all immediate appearances, for example, the hierarchical organization of labour is objectively conditioned, in its turn, by the laws of processing and assembling information, without which there would be no management and

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social differentiation largely reflects, beyond the traditional class division, the differentiation of work functions itself, and so on. At this level of analysis, therefore, demands bearing on the overcoming of subalternity can still easily be rejected as unrealistic. Many people, even those who see themselves as Marxists, fall into the old ideological fallacy of seeing the subordination and inferiority of individuals as the cause of the prevailing relations of domination, instead of their consequence.

If we are to find the source of an alternative, we must pursue the analysis at a deeper level. We must search for the general relation of production that gives actually existing socialism its character as a social formation, and appears as a common denominator in the various factors giving rise to subalternity. This underlying relation of production is the organization of the entire society on the basis of the traditional division of labour. On this basis, in other words, the general organization of the state can only take such a form that we find, to put it more precisely, relations of the traditional division of labour and of the state in actually existing socialism. The 'and' here is not a coupling of disparate factors, but is intended to draw the two determinations together into one: relations of the traditional division of labour and of the state.

The Division of Labour

In this conception, I emphasize the 'traditional division of labour'. By this division of labour, like Marx, I do not mean specialization as such, i.e. concentration on these activities or the other, but rather the already mentioned subordination of individuals and their entire life process to specialized partial functions. It is only this subordination that makes individuals so rarely appear as social beings, and so often merely as saleswomen, chauffeurs, schoolteachers, engineers, politicians, generals, etc. The dilemma of the traditional division of labour even begins with distinctions at the same level of activity, between fitter and bricklayer, physicist and economist, in as much as their reduction to mere compartmentalized spheres of competence, while it does not give rise to a power relationship between them, can still give rise to a particular unifying instance over them. What is decisive for social inequality, however, is the vertical division of labour by functions requiring varying levels of ability and knowledge, accordingly by varying levels of education, and not least by a hierarchical pyramid of managerial powers.

As psychology has clearly shown, distinctions of human ability persistently depend on the activities pursued. Someone who always has to perform work that does not develop his powers of judgement, his capacities for abstraction, will thereby to a large extent be precluded from helping to decide on more general affairs. In actually existing socialism, democracy is understood to mean that people should participate in work, planning and government according to their competence. The cleaning woman is competent with the dishcloth, and the politburo member in preparing war and peace.

By excluding people in a varying degree, but sometimes definitively and decisively, from comprehensive functions and the formation of the

tence. The historical root still showing its effects today, for all its modifications, is the antithesis between predominantly manual or executive work, and predominantly mental work—work of planning and command. Those who work with their hands carry others; those who work with their heads are carried by others', so the Chinese philosopher Mencius taught more than 2000 years ago. The vertical division of labour spills over into the state without needing any further intermediate term.

In the ancient economic despotism, the state function is almost identical with the management of large-scale cooperation and society's overall life. Marx writes in Capital of the ancient Egyptian priestly caste as the managers of agriculture. We know that the oriental state bureaucracy and theocracy, with or without a great king at the head, had private ownership neither of land nor of workers. 'Only' as a corporation, i.e. as an administrative and ideological state apparatus, did it have power of disposal over the surplus in goods and labour-power. The general type of this relationship of domination is the same as in actually existing socialism, and what is involved here is not a superficial analogy, but rather a substantial affinity in the basic structure of the relations of production.

This may seem astonishing at first, given the great distance in time and history, and the striking difference in the technical basis. But I would recall Marx's well-known idea that modern communism would be a kind of return to primitive communism at a higher level. In this perspective, the earliest and latest class societies fit logically together, in a general sense, in their quality as transition periods, at the dawn of class society in the one case and at its demise in the other. We should also bear in mind that Marx explained the development of modes of production also—and not least—with a geotectonic model, the depositing of successive strata. The primitive community is the primary formation. Above it are deposited secondary and tertiary social formations. In this sense, the relations of the traditional division of labour and the state are a secondary formation. They represent the oldest, most fundamental and most general relation of production of class society. This persists as the original and basic support for all oppression, all exploitation, all alienation of individuals from the totality, from the decline of the primitive community through to our own day. It is only on top of this stratum that the specifically developed class societies of the tertiary formation are erected, with the dominance of private property in the means of production: i.e. slavery, feudalism, and capitalism.

A Crucial Misconception

The early socialists failed to draw the ultimate theoretical conclusions from the visible sickness of the capitalist formation, given their hope that with its dissolution all emancipation could be achieved at once. They were certainly always aware that without abolishing the traditional division of labour and the state there could be no social justice, no real freedom, no equality, no brotherhood. Yet no special problem seemed to arise here, since this process was to be accomplished simultaneously with

m the meantaine that it is only the tertiary formation that is removed with private property, while the common basis of all relations of domination is still an epoch-making problem. The economic nucleus of all class rule, with its consequences for the position of man in society, always remain the same: society's own surplus product, in the beginning directly its own surplus labour, is withdrawn from its control and disposal and concentrated against it as a means of power in the hands of others. The specific nature of actually existing socialism as a social formation is precisely its reduction to this general essence of all class society.

The relations of private property gradually drove the state function to the margin of the economic process. The classical bourgeois state in particular was -as the young Marx called it -simply a 'political state', in other words merely an additional shield for the relations of production, in the last analysis economically superfluous. In actually existing socialism, on the other hand, the state wins back its original all-pervading character in an expanded sense. What we have here is the socialization of the reproduction process and its performance function in the alienated form of universal nationalization. The non-capitalist apparatus-state is at once administrative superstructure and political expression of the traditional division of labour. It appears as the absolute taskmaster of society. It functions, as Marx in his time characterized the universal bank of the Saint-Simonians, as a 'papacy of production'. This order of things inevitably suggests to us the words of Mephistopheles as the fundamental watchword of subalternity: Believe the likes of me: the single whole/was fashioned for a god alone'.4

Revolutionary Potential and the Party

The analysis of actually existing socialism as a social formation leads to the necessity of a new social and political revolution, a cultural revolution against the rule of the traditional division of labour and the state. The task, however, is to discover in the present social relations themselves the source of the movement that will abolish the existing conditions. Where then are the forces that will undertake this? Do they exist at all? It is true that up to now they have not appeared in any very striking form. The great exception was the year 1968 in Czechoslovakia, and I shall come back to this. For the moment I would simply like to recognize one fact. At that time, not only was the potential shown to exist, but the factor that generally blocks this potential was also visible. It became visible precisely by disappearing for a few months. This factor was the rule of a party which originally made its appearance with a programme of general emancipation, but which represents today the centre of all oppression in our society. This party, with its apparatus, occupies the very place that rightly belongs to a vanguard for the interests of emancipation. And the moment the Czech Communist Party showed even the attempt to resume the original emancipatory function of a L communist party, all pointers of social hope immediately began to cluster together and orient themselves towards it.

⁴ Goethe's Faust, Part One, lines 1780-81

the problem of the party. These two problems still pertain to the analysis of the present relations of production. They even bear on the decisive, dynamic aspect of these relations with the perspective of change. To start with, the two problems should be given more precise names. First, there is the massive production of surplus consciousness by the general process of reproduction under actual socialism. Secondly, there is the leading role of the party as a sociological reality. The two are both constitutive factors of our relations of production. The first factor has scarcely been recognized up till now as a fact of political economy; the second is only rarely classified theoretically as consistently as it is practised in political domination. These two factors, to anticipate somewhat here, are presently acting against one another. This is the dilemma in which actually existing socialism is stagnating after a preliminary period of accumulation, in which little surplus consciousness was as yet produced.

If, in the search for the subject of change, we direct attention to this surplus consciousness, if we see in this the potential, the reservoir, from which that subject will be recruited, then we are departing from an old theoretical custom which is easily if wrongly equated with historical materialism itself. The general rule would be to immediately look for a particular class or social stratum disposed to play the corresponding historical role. The intelligentsia, for example, might be suggested. This would certainly have a rational kernel, but it would still involve an erroneous point of departure. The social structure in late class society, class society in the process of dissolution, can only be described in these categories in a backward perspective.

What has become particularly unserviceable is the concept of the working class. On the far side of capitalism, this concept serves only to conceal the real power and give it a pseudo-legitimation. There can be no question of the rule of the working class, and certainly not for the future. Nor does the apparatus rule as a kind of representative of the working class, it rules over the working class. The workers have as much say in the state that is given their name as common soldiers do in a regular army. Yet it is not the contradiction between the people and the functionaries, or more accurately between the masses and the apparatus, which we can establish by analysis, that gives us our basis of hope. What is involved here is only the contradiction in which actually existing socialism moves just as normally as classical bourgeois society does in the contradiction of wage-labour and capital. Certainly there are crises and peaks of intensity. but they generally give rise to partially regenerative compromises, as in Poland in 1970, when Edward Gierek used the following formula in addressing the workers: You work well, and we will govern well'. In this way, we only get a new cycle of the dilemma already established. The contradiction between the masses and the apparatus, by its very nature, does not lead us out of the existing system.

An Inadequate Model

When this is considered more closely, the reason is that this contradic-

way, not more perspective of the apparatus. In relation to the apparatus, and as defined from its point of view, the masses represent above all the mass of subalternity, which is the result and reverse side of the concentration of all officially recognized knowledge and all power of decision in the bureaucratic hierarchy. One side of the main contradiction driving our political development forward, the domination of the apparatus, is adequately and completely represented in this antithesis. The concept of the apparatus, as the pole to be attacked, is precise enough for strategic purposes. To break its domination—which however is not the same thing as its abolition—is the historical task. But 'the masses' will not be the subject that accomplishes this task—unless the concept of the masses is extended in the same way that Marx in his time extended the concept of the proletariat, when he ascribed to it a world-historical mission. I think it is clear today that this was a mystification, even if not a groundless or infertile one. It reflected the role of the revolutionary intelligentsia, which was supposed to convey 'consciousness' into what, taken by itself, was still just a subaltern class, and thus take the leadership of this class. In this very way, as it happens, the rule of the post-capitalist or noncapitalist apparatus was already prefigured in the prerevolutionary workers' organizations.

The inadequacy of the model of apparatus and masses (the masses taken in their actuality, i.e. without a mission) consists above all in that it is situated entirely in the realm of 'alienated' consciousness, consciousness absorbed by necessary labour and its regulation, and leaves surplus consciousness simply out of account. This is, however, to introduce into the theory the standpoint of the apparatus itself, which has no use for this surplus, but rather fears it. What I call absorbed consciousness is that expenditure of psychosocial energy which is spent on the one hand in the hierarchy of managerial functions, on the other hand in the routine activities of the reproduction process. Thus we have a confrontation between 1. the bureaucratic knowledge organized for command over the labour process and the process of life in general, which is politically expressed in the interests of the apparatus, in the arrogant exercise of power that is provocative right from the start; and 2. the abstract, alienated labour in production, services and management which is expressed in subaltern reactions and modes of behaviour, in poor performance and kowtowing, in lack of interest and indifference to public affairs. In short, these are two sides of one and the same medal; and as long as these forces persist at the level of this model, there is a constellation which is ultimately unfruitful. The bureaucratic apparatus and the subaltern masses are each as good as the other.

Surplus Consciousness

But it is precisely what is left out in this confrontation, surplus consciousness, that is the decisive potential for social change. Surplus consciousness is the growing quantity of free psychosocial energy which is no longer tied up in necessary labour and hierarchical knowledge. To a certain extent, there has always been this energy. It is precisely a human characteristic never to be completely consumed in the restricted conditions imposed by the necessary and official framework of society at the

from this transcendence of human essential powers. As long as society produced only a small amount of skill, only a small élite, the apparatus absorbed the greater part of the mental energy and capacity released from immediate production. The form of the ancient economic despotism was decisively connected also with the size, in fact the small size, of the disposable élite, its skill and the laws of its reproduction. At that time, this level of skill was produced simply in the measure required by the simple reproduction of the relations of dominance of the time. In material production, there was scarcely any need for intellectual work!

Today, we are faced with a thorough-going intellectualization of the subjective forces of production. Even though the apparatus is a burden on the rate of development, society produces such a quantity of general ability, human skill in the abstract, that this cannot possibly be directly employed by the apparatus. This is why we see such unflinching attempts by this apparatus, partly to disperse the unspent surplus consciousness in unproductive occupations, partly to paralyse it with terror, and above all to divert it into substitute satisfactions. This latter is, incidentally, the real political purpose of our much prized 'unity of economic and social policy'.

In actually existing socialism, this surplus consciousness gains additional disruptive force by coming up against barriers that are erected specifically against it, against the preventive jealousy of the bureaucratic power monopoly which cannot be tamed. It comes systematically to challenge the real quality of the bureaucracy, its potential as a productive force, its competence in social knowledge and decision-making. The apparatus acts in the terms of reference of its usurpation, i.e. that it already represents all meaningful consciousness in itself. What would things come to, if someone else in society had greater and better knowledge than the politburocracy? At the very least, everyone must subordinate his insights and wait modestly and patiently to see whether his proposals are 'viable', i.e. can be assimilated by the machinery or not. Everything has to be adapted to the final purpose of bureaucratic stability. The arts and sciences must be above all else organs for preserving this power. Everything which oversteps the official universe, and particularly that which constitutes the essence of surplus consciousness, is either blocked or driven back into the sphere of isolated private affairs, each separate from the other.

Alienated labour and the pressure of the apparatus firstly determine that a certain quantity of surplus consciousness must use its free time to strive for suitable substitute satisfactions, and these are provided as fully as possible. Circumstances limit and impede the growth, development and self-confidence of innumerable people, from earliest youth. They are then compelled to seek compensation in consumption, in passive amusement, and in attitudes governed by prestige and power. This is what the compensatory interests depend on. This concept is very important for me; I shall come back again to how the cultural revolution will react on it. Yet the specific nature, the most inner tendency of surplus consciousness is expressed not in the interests of compensation, but in those of emancipation. These are oriented to the growth of man as a personality, to the

social activity. They demand above all the potentially all-round appropriation of culture which, while it certainly has to do with things that one can consume, is fundamentally aimed at something else: at the powers of human nature that are realized in other individuals, in objects, modes of behaviour, relationships, even in institutions. The highest goal of this appropriation is liberation from all confinement, and above all from subalternity of thinking, feeling, and behaviour; it is the raising of the individual to the level of the general life of society. As Goethe put it, "Whatever is the lot of humankind, I want to taste within my deepest self". In their conscious form, the emancipatory interests are revolutionary, and their political programme then becomes the struggle for the conditions of general emancipation.

Where the Cultural Revolution will be Fought

In order to discover the potential for the impending transformation, I have proceeded by way of a structural analysis of social consciousness, which I take in its capacity as a thoroughly material and socio-economic reality. The apparatus, the state itself, is of course an 'ideological super} structure', and is in its substance an alienated consciousness with the function of domination. The entire mental life of society is the battlefield of the coming cultural revolution—and this mental life does not run counter to material existence, but precisely by way of the reproduction process and its goals, its centre of gravity being information and decision. What is at stake is a new constitution for the whole of social life, and a new order for the work of science and its institutional framework.

It follows from this that a revolutionary strategy must find its bearings in the context of a quite specific balance of forces in social consciousness, one could even say a balance of forces in the recruitment of skill of all kinds, of the subjective productive forces. It must find its bearings in the structure of the transformation and expenditure of society's mental energy. With this in view, I have distinguished the four fractions of social consciousness briefly mentioned above, two in absorbed consciousness, two in surplus consciousness. In absorbed consciousness, as we saw, the interests of the bureaucratic apparatus and the subaltem reactions of the masses stand in opposition, while in surplus consciousness the compensatory interests of individuals confront their emancipatory interests. These four factors, which arise regularly and inevitably from the responses men make to the contradictions of the mode of production under actual socialism, constitute the political field of forces typical of our social relations.

The problem here is not, or is only exceptionally, to reduce particular individuals to particular fractions of consciousness as thus defined. In general, we can proceed from the assumption that each individual participates to a greater or lesser extent in all four fractions. The question is simply which orientation of interests momentarily prevails in their structure of motivations and hence in their behaviour. This is how people's minds are divided. There are, however, some people who are so

⁵ Faust, in Faust Part One, lines 1770-71

with the apparatus, that they can simply be reduced to their official fore. This minority is the apparatus party in the narrow sense, the party opolithurocratic reaction against whom the attack must be focussed.

This attack can only be carried forward by the emancipatory interests Between these two poles there is an ideological battle for influence on the mass of psychosocial potential bound up in necessary labour and compensatory satisfactions. As long as the apparatus is dominant, the emancipatory interests, which are then also sociologically atomized so to speak, see themselves confronted with a behavioural tendency of all other fractions of consciousness—which under these circumstances is predominantly subaltern: i.e. the apparatus subordinates all othe consciousness by the exercise of political power. But in the cultural revolution whose preconditions are maturing, the dominant apparatue is on the contrary isolated, and individuals acquire even in their necessary labour and in their free activities or enjoyments an integral behaviour i.e. one oriented to an intelligent insertion into the totality.

The emancipatory interests provide the substance that must be brough together and organized to create the subject of the impending trans formation. From a purely empirical stand-point, this subject consists o the energetic and creative elements in all strata and areas of society, of al people in whose individuality the emancipatory interests predominate or at least play a major part—one influencing their behaviour. It is the task of a genuine communist party in actually existing socialism to forn this force, to give it the convergent political organization which i needs, if it is to struggle against the rule of the apparatus and maintain its identity against all influences of merely subaltern and compensatory behaviour.

The ruling parties in actually existing socialism quite evidently do no offer the basis for this. Their 'leading role' has a quite other content, on that is repressive through and through. They have completely sold ou to the interests of the apparatus. Still more, they expressly form it militant summit. They are the jealous watchdogs of the state authority Thus they leave the space open for a new league of communists, on which offers solidaristic support for emancipatory needs, and provides: moral and political authority higher than any apparatus. The communist movement must be created anew, a movement which again inscribe human liberation clearly on its banner and transforms human life on thi basis.

The Bureaucratized Party

Why is a new league of communists needed in the countries of actually existing socialism? To answer this question, one must first find out what the leading role of the parties now ruling actually consists in, and how we have reached the point where the ruling parties stand in direct opposition to the interests of emancipation. The heart of the matter is their own bureaucratization, which makes them incapable of distancing them selves from the state machine, from 'étatism'. Never before has their existed a form of domination whose authoritiative representatives

allow us to deduce that the living body of the party had been overpowered by its bureaucracy. In the 'growing role of the state', as it is described, the party apparatus celebrates above all the condition for its own neverending reproduction. It is precisely the given form of existence of the party itself (not so much that of the state) which makes the deification of the state a necessity. In the structures of the party, right up to the Central Committee apparatus (which is in reality only the totality of functions of the politbureau spread out more widely), one finds a reduplication in compressed form of all branches and levels of the state and other bureaucracy—just as all branches of social life, without exception, have already been duplicated in the apparatus of government and official 'social organizations'.

To explain the party apparatus, one must recall the origins of our situation. The Leninist conception of the mechanism of proletarian dictatorship had reckoned on the activity of the masses. The so-called 'transmission' of the energies of the party was supposed to proceed not in a primarily repressive fashion, via the state, but in an educational way, through the trade unions and other social organizations. The trade unions, in particular, were supposed to be not only schools for socialism, but at the same time instruments of struggle against the bureaucratic degeneration of state power. However, they became neither the one nor the other. Their role has suffered from a dystrophy so serious as to be already dangerous to the state machine itself, as has been demonstrated again and again by the situation in Poland since 1970. Even in Lenin's lifetime, the real transmission took place through the state apparatus. And now, in view of the absence of powerful correctives from below, there naturally arises the question of how the party is to control the state machine, so that it does not degenerate and become corrupt in the automatic course of bureaucratic routine. The solution is now said to consist in the construction of a further bureaucracy, placed over the state apparatus as a party apparatus. At the summit of this there stands, in the shape of the politbureau, an institution that is de facto self-recruiting. Who is to be accepted as a fresh member of this leadership is decided by those who are already in there, and not even by all of them. These 'communists' go so far as to provide their own order of precedence for internal seating arrangements, according to levels of rank within the politburcau.

The dictatorship of the politbureau is a fateful exaggeration of the bureaucratic principle, because the party apparatus which obeys it is, so to speak, an ecclesiastical hierarchy and a supra-state rolled into one. The whole structure is quasi-theocratic. For the essence of political power here—to say nothing of the hypertrophy of executive and police organs—is spiritual power, with its constant tendency towards an inquisition, so that the party itself is the actual political police. The party apparatus as the nucleus of state power signifies the secularization of the theocratic state. Never, since the collapse of the theocracies of antiquity, have the secular and spiritual authorities been concentrated in this way in a single hand. This institutional identity between the authority of the state, the power to make economic decisions, and the claim to an ideo-

polithureau and its apparatus, which reaches fight down to the bass, the main politico-economic problem in socialism as it actually exists. That is the Gordian knot which has first to be cut.

The apparatus is blind towards any reaction by society to its owburdensome existence. This blindness goes far beyond the individuablinkers worn by the most important people in it. The present-day part organization is a structure that actively produces false consciousness of a mass scale, not only for society but also for its own use. It ought to be social structure allowing development of the social process of know ledge. It ought to be a system in which all the thinking elements of the people can take part. Instead of this, the ideology put out by the apparatu inserts itself between social thought and reality, like a tinted and distorting lens with numerous blind spots. The masses, who cannot be informed of how this lens grew and was constructed, how it is adjusted and turned, can only abandon any attempt to utilize the instrument. And they do too: they 'switch off' even before the official prayer-mills have churned out the first phrase.

But the tragedy here is this, that they must then give up any hope of differentiated knowledge at all, because the society does not possess at alternative structure for this. Worse still: thanks to the total control exercised by the apparatus over the means of mass communication and the educational system, the theory which is best suited to penetrate the jungle of bureaucratic centralism and its holy of holies the politbureau—namely revolutionary Marxism—is still so effectively usurped by the party bureaucracy that the masses' ever-present distrust strikes at it as well. Whatever the variant in which it presents itself, the people suspect it has been deliberately created to justify the present domination of the party. Inquisitorially all-powerful, the party is at the same time increasingly, and quite literally, despised for something previous epochs called spiritual powerlessness. And naturally, wherever the West's technique of communication are adequate, its ideological mass production pour into the extremely rarefied vacuum that has ansen in this way.

Why a New Party is Necessary KP 3410

Thus the establishment of a monopoly of all political, economic, and intellectual power of decision has led to an insuperable contradiction between the social task of the party and its politico-organizational form of existence. Its internal constitution and its leading role as a supra state apparatus form today the decisive obstacles in the way of a development towards the further emancipation of humanity within our system. The party is destroying the ideas in whose name it stepped onto the stage. It is destroying the continuity of the communist movement in the individuals who should be the repositories of that continuity. Already by its mere physical existence, without committing any more specific perfidy, the present party apparatus is the grave-digger of the party idea and any individual party convictions. Precisely those people who are communists by conviction and character are made superfluous as party members. Furthermore, if the apparatus does not succeed in making them into bureaucrats, in integrating them into itself, they can only

endanger its stability, so that it is logical to hold the machinery in a state of readiness for action against them. In such a party, the communists are organized against themselves and against the people. No further analysis is needed to show that in the developed countries of actually existing socialism this type of party is historically superfluous, and must therefore be liquidated. Upon its ruins, a new organization, with a fundamentally different function, must be set up, an organization best called a league of communists.

When I say in this way 'the communist party is dead; long live the communist party', I am not referring to some kind of metaphysical necessity whereby the party must exist always and under all circumstances. It is rather that the party has an entirely concrete task as an instrument of social change, and in a quite specific situation. I also have my reasons for speaking of a single party, for counterposing a single new party to the old one.

I have shown that, so long as the old division of labour has not been overcome, down to its last roots in the individuals themselves, there will necessarily exist a contradiction between the emancipatory needs of human beings and the apparatus they require for the regulation of their conditions of existence. For as long as this situation prevails, this apparatus will be a state, essentially a repressive machine. The historic necessity for a communist party in proto-socialist society is founded on nothing other than the existence of this contradiction. The party's most basic theme, then, is the relation between society and the state, the perspective of the re-entry of the state into society.

In my view, the tendency towards a single, united party which can be observed in all variants of the non-capitalist path is connected with the peculiar nature of this social structure—and specifically with its dominant problem, this relation between society and the state. If the whole social organization is once generally brought to realization as a state system, there is simply no necessary starting-point left for a multiplicity of parties. This starting-point can then only be the narrow and restricted sphere of particular interests, in distinction from and opposition to the general interest—no matter how alienated the form taken initially by the latter. Particular interests must attain their full rights—and prior to this, of course, gain unrestricted articulation—in another way than through political parties. One example among others would be through sovereign trade unions.

Nevertheless, the unity (the one-ness) of the party, prescribed in this as it were ideal-typical manner by non-capitalist relations, can only be understood as a dialectical process. If the party forgets after the revolution that it is the superstructure of an as yet unchanged or scarcely changed society, in which it now sits as a superstructure which is unconditionally to be comprehended and transcended, as the provisional, larval form of the new order—if it forgets this, then it cannot remain united, but must be split.

If, on the other hand, it succeeds in organizing itself in such a way as to be able to initiate and lead a series of opportune and successive re-

unity remain latent, let the continuity or the single party the infance (although there should never be a complete continuity in its leading personnel). But it must be clear that one political structure is genuinely being replaced by another, as a lever to assist a further economic transformation, rather than that petty reforms and 'structural alterations' are being made to one or another isolated institution. The society cannot wait too long for this decision. Because for there to be an advance towards general emancipation, under conditions where the whole of society is organized, there must exist a party. And for this very reason, the existing party must be burst asunder and split as soon as it falls short in face of its main task, which is to dismantle the old division of labour, and with it its pre-requisite: the state, the étatist-bureaucratic syndrome.

The oppositional grouping, which must already form spontaneously under such conditions, does not endeavour to become a second party alongside the old one—or, more precisely, to remain a party. It can in fact, both subjectively and objectively, have no other intention than the restoration of unity on the basis of a renewed programme and a renewed internal constitution. The split is a transitory moment of the historical process. It is directed not against the idea of the party, but against its apparatus; against the party's entanglement with the state, of which the party apparatus is an embodiment. Society should once again have a leadership which is not fixed in the apparatus. The leaders must live in society and participate in its day-to-day work.

Tasks of the New Party

In the first phase of actually existing socialism, the party revolutionized society with the aid of the state, of the apparatus, and in this it was up to a certain point successful. Now it is a matter of making a fresh alignment between the state and the apparatus, on the one hand, and society on the other; basing this on the superabundance of new consciousness stored up in society. If the absence of control from below of the bureaucracy is the reason why the party has so far played the role of a suprastate apparatus, there is only one solution to the problem: the party itself must establish, as the very centre of its policy, control of the bureaucracy—of the state machine—by the forces of society. It must shape these forces in such a way that they massively confront the apparatus as autonomous powers, and are able to force it towards progressive compromises. This requires the organization of communism as a mass movement. Ir principle, this signifies a division of social power; the establishment of a progressive dialectic between the state and the forces of society. The communists must themselves bring the contradiction into the government apparatus. The result will be a situation of regulated dual power, in which the étatist side of the equation gradually loses its predominance. Stick fast with étatism or go forward to the cultural revolution-those are the two alternatives.

In order to maintain and prove itself in this situation, the party must achieve ideological hegemony, something it will never again attain if it remains constituted as at present. To do this, it must organize itself not lems of its development. The concept of the collective intellectual is a legacy from Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci's starting-point was the way the ideological authority of the party depends directly on the quality of its intellectual production; on the power of comprehension and mobilization possessed by the model in which it reflects social reality and prescribes the direction of change.

Accordingly, the league of communists must be organized differently from the way the party has so far been organized. The organizational structure must fit in with the character of the league's chief activity. Successful work in the field of knowledge requires that all participants have access to the totality of significant information; it requires a 'horizontal', non-hierarchical co-ordination of investigations on the basis of the self-activity of the interested persons; it requires the admission of hypotheses which burst through the customery conceptual framework; and finally, it requires the free discussion of different interpretations, without evaluation by any official authorities empowered to confirm or invalidate them. If the organization of communists is to serve in this way to socialize political understanding and decision-making, the first condition to be met is a party structure open to all the authentic forces of a tendentially non-antagonistic society. Any kind of exclusive sectarianism, any trading over the secrets of power behind closed and padded doors will prevent the utilization of all the living, productive elements of work and culture.

If the task of liquidating subalternity is correctly posed, people within the party must unconditionally rid themselves of any glorification of socalled proletarian discipline-something which Lenin took over from Kautsky because it was suitable for Russian reality. What Lenin emphasized in his time was the capacity for military organization, and the readiness of the working masses to obey commands and subordinate themselves to the superior foresight and intellectual power of a political 1 general staff. Lenin obliterated the contrast between factory discipline and party discipline, which was being elaborated at that very time by Rosa Luxemburg. It goes without saying that at present too an effective organization requires an apparatus and discipline, not only in the administration but also in the party. But in their organization, communists must invert the relation of forces between, on the one hand, the level of discussion and decision about the values, goals, ways and means of policy and, on the other hand, the sphere of the apparatus for implementing policy. The process by which the state machine is turned into an instrument of service and administration can only be set in motion if it starts within the party; if the domination of the secretaries and secretariats over the party is broken. Communists must free their policies from any determining influence whatsoever on the part of a party apparatus, and establish their collective sovereignty over the apparatus. It must be possible for every communist to step out of his role as a disciplined member if need be, and make a decision on conscientious grounds.

Bringing all this together, one can say that the party must wager its old institutional existence against its spiritual renewal. I want to compress

munists today. It would have to be: 1. not a working-class party in the old—and far too narrow—sense, but a combination of all those people, from all strata and groups in society, whose consciousness is dominated by emancipatory needs and interests; 2. not a mass party of the sort where a self-appointed élite leadership of authoritarian intellectuals manipulates those labelled 'members', but a union of individuals who are like-minded, i.e. interested in solving the same problems and all regarded as equally competent; 3. not a sectarian corporation of 'those who know best', closed off from society, but a revolutionary community open towards society and which anyone striving in the same direction can join; 4. not a supra-state organization which guides and controls the actual apparatus of the state and administration from outside and from above, but the ideal inspirer of an integrated activity of all groups at the base, which gives people the capacity to control all decision-making processes from within; 5. not an obedient army carrying out bureaucratic decisions about maintaining and extending the status quo, but what Gramsci called a collective intellectual, creating and exercising majority consensus for change, in democratic communication with all interests in society. The main function of this league of communists will consist in so introducing society into the cultural revolution that it passes through a planned—and yet not imposed—practical change; a change, therefore, which is brought about by overwhelmingly positive needs.

The Economic Alternative

If we may conclude from what has been said so far that there exists a broad emancipatory interest in actually existing socialist society; and if we find it conceivable to organize this interest politically in the shape of a new league of communists; then the question of an economic strategy of general emancipation, and an action programme for the cultural revolution, becomes our central concern. More than a political revolution is required to dam up the sources of subalternity and alienation. What is required is a radical economic alternative. This economic alternative must reckon with the fact that the existing relations have struck deep roots in the habits and attitudes of the masses. That means above all that it must be conceptually armed to confront the compensatory needs of the masses, so that they are prevented from blocking the transition into the emancipatory process.

Marxism does not utter laments about the indolence and submissiveness of human beings; about their apparent—or even on occasion their actual—unwillingness to be free. It advocates an active, Promethean solidarity with those who are most oppressed; and a concentration of forces on raising up less-developed, disadvantaged and underprivileged strata and groups. For one thing is clear: if conditions for the ripening of free individuality—and these are realities of the economic and political process which can be stated quite precisely—are not created for everyone, all emancipation must remain incomplete and hence once again become untrue. This means, therefore, something in the nature of a two-stage programme. Before we turn to our conception of the goal, i.e. the question of how a society must be organized to ensure the free development of each of its members, we must concentrate in practical political

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whole strategy as an outline of the path to be followed. So the first problem is as follows: how can one neutralize the compensatory interests which bind human beings to the existing form of civilization?

The solution naturally depends on one's conception of the goal. The two stages of the cultural revolution cannot simply run their course mechanically, one after the other. It is necessary to set a course towards a totally new type of economic reproduction, not only, as we have already stated, because of the environmental and resource crisis, but also in order to relax the tension which leads to the drive for substitute satisfactions. Competition in growth exaggerates inequalities in the material living standard of human beings and peoples, and thereby also their need for compensations. The more is produced, the more must be striven for, possessed and consumed, and the more psychological energy is tied up in abstract labour and compensatory enjoyments, which means it is subtracted from the emancipatory forces. Material insatiability costs us the freedom for higher development, subjects us to regulations which rest on compulsion, and gives society a step-motherly character. If the explosion of material needs cannot be brought to a halt, communism will become not only economically but also psychologically impossible. When Marx said that communism presupposed an abundance of goods, he meant in the first instance an abundance of the actual means of subsistence, the necessities of life. In the industrialized countries, the driving dialectic of production and needs has shifted its emphasis to the field of the means of enjoyment and development. The compensatory desire and compulsion to possess, to use, to consume, has forced the continuation of a fight for production, in which we shall still be too poor for communism in a hundred years. But the infernal cycle of capitalist growth-dynamics must be broken.

For practical economic policy, the first problem posed is the initial impulse for such a breakthrough. What can be done to blunt the edge of the massive need for compensations? This need must be satisfied as far & as possible, but also as cheaply as possible. There is a series of immediate measures, a number of 'abolitions' in the first place, whose common denominator is their appeal to the yearning for social justice. These negative measures thereby point beyond themselves to further action. First, bureaucratic corruption from above must be liquidated in all its open and concealed, sanctified and non-sanctified forms without exception Included in this would be such steps as an upper limitation of the scale of incomes, the removal of all special arrangements made to care for the material, social, medicinal, cultural and other requirements of the apparatus of functionaries, and the reduction of expenses for official visits and security. Included too would be an end to the petty-bourgeois pomp of orders and decorations, and the elimination of all extra payments connected with these.

Secondly, work norms and piece wages should be abolished. Because of its unjustness in principle towards the victims, the situation in which some workers are seen as 'super-efficient' stimulates attitudes of protest and self-defence; it causes manoeuvres which disturb, for example, the optimal functioning of machinery and technology; it is costly in terms

efficient colleagues; it increases the amount of illness; it prevents an exact measurement of individual capacity, and so on. The entire sum of psychic energy which is invested in—or diverted by—the conflict of interests bound up with work norms and piece wages is lost to the development of the productive forces; it works actively and passively against this development.

What is needed, in the third place, is periodic, planned participation of all the directing and intellectual personnel of society in the simple labour of material production—as also in other areas. For this purpose, a mode of regular and relatively lasting attachment to given work-collectives must be created; and it must be possible to apply this flexibly, so that the choice of this second place of work does not take place without the active participation of the individual—albeit within a helpful institutional framework. From this, an impulse will go out (which could otherwise hardly be achieved) from all those who, on the basis of the old—and still extant—division of labour, performed largely directive and creative activities, towards unceasing confrontation with the causes and consequences of social inequality in the distribution of labour and education in our society, and without any self-satisfied idealization of their own position in it.

Finally, a rigorous correction of the wage structure is needed, to be prepared through a somewhat longer-term discussion at the base. The establishment of a just wage, which is at present distorted by innumerable disproportions, must at the same time be conceived as an advance towards the equalization of incomes. For later on, the cultural revolution will put a question-mark over both the general validity of the efficiency principle for the distribution of income, and the application of so-called material incentives as the most important regulator of efficiency. A levelling out of the quality of consumption throughout society would be the condition for getting beyond the principle of quantity, beyond compensatory consumption.

A Transformed Structure of Needs

Thus the aim of the conception of cultural revolution, in its first stage, is that the greatest possible amount of psychic energy should be drawn off from the complex of compensatory modes of behaviour; and that this energy should then be applied towards a radical reconstruction of the structure of needs. The centre of gravity of the conflict between social interests will then be displaced to the conditions for the appropriation of culture. This will then 'of itself' bring about an altered structure of material consumption. The reduction of compensatory needs to a subordinate position can only succeed if impulses positively thrust towards much more far-reaching perspectives. The communist goal of production is a free and rich individuality, as a real fact which determines in its entirety the way in which society is connected together. It is measured in the first place by that quality of individual knowing, feeling and acting, which is required at a given cultural level in order to set oneself in an active relation to the social whole. As the laws of social life have the whole ensemble as their subject, individuals do not attain their

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second place, this tree and rich individuality is also bound up with the all-round nature of the individual's activities and relations. We therefore have to realize the conditions for emancipation from the vertical division of labour altogether, and from as many as possible of the restrictions of the horizontal division of labour.

In order to reshape the objective conditions for the development of human subjectivity in this sense, the cultural revolution must above all set in motion a redistribution of labour, according to the principle that everyone will have an equal share in activities at the different levels of functioning, and that the equal social validity of the individuals carrying on all the necessary labour will be anchored in the only possible way: no one will any longer be confined to the function of a specific, restricted or subordinate activity. All monopolization of activities favourable to self-development must cease, if we are to overcome its counterpart, the pre-programmed underdevelopment of other individuals—and thereby bring to an end the last form of exploitation.

There follows from this the necessity of unrestricted access by the whole population, at the highest 'university' level, to a general education comprising society and the arts, nature and technology. This is the alternative to a differentiation of strata according to levels of education and socially incompetent specialisms of every kind. Specialization should be ascribed a subordinate and subsequent significance. In exposition to the whole thousand-year tradition of the partiarchal achievementsociety, the cultural revolution must shape the situation of children and the process of socialization so that the overwhelming majority of the rising generation can maintain and heighten an appropriate capacity and motivational readiness for development. Such a process of education naturally demands a general practice within which it can be brought to fruition. It demands above all the recovery of a communal life on the basis of autonomous group activities, of different types according to individuals; for only around these can self-fulfilled human relations crystallize. The isolation and particularization of human beings in the solitary cells of the modern world of work-time, school-time, family time and free time becomes the deepest source of social unhappiness and social incapacity.

The decisive political requirement is the socialization—and at the same time democratization—of the general processes of knowledge and decision; it is that they should take place outside and above any kind of hierarchical apparatus. Without a political practice of complete freedom to participate in communication with others about social values, goals and paths, there no longer exists any progress towards human emancipation. Only when this freedom is presupposed can a realizable economic strategy for cultural revolution be worked out. For the re-programming of the whole economy, the whole of the relation between production and need, as well as the informational regulation of the process of reproduction, would inevitably lead to wasteful social conflicts if there was no success in bringing about the constantly renewed assent of the majority.

members a relatively reliable satisfaction of elementary needs at the cultural level it has attained, economic planning must gradually—but definitely—be re-directed to give priority to the all-round development of human beings and the expansion of their positive possibilities for happiness. Both the growth of production and the growth of the productivity of labour will in practice lose their aureole as inescapable economic necessities. This will not mean, inversely, that zero growth is in its turn made into a law; but that the criterion of quantity is altogether deprived of its paramount position. The social framework should no longer be based on the pre-suppositions of scarcity and poverty, which have since become incorrect. This means that we must finally stop allowing late capitalism to prescribe for us what wealth is; what—and for what purposes—we must produce; and what criteria of effectiveness must determine our production.

The Overthrow of Objectified Labour

In the realm of necessity too, a socialist society will offer a general area where there is room for independent activity, for the self-realization and growth of the personality. That means, economically speaking, that it will end the rule of objectified labour over living labour. There should be no more living, learning, consuming, relaxing, enjoying oneself, merely to restore labour-power for the next cycle of production. Planning must start not with a balance-sheet of labour-time, but with one of social time as a whole; with a budget of people's time for the totality of expressions of their life. It must provide a framework of conditions furthering development for all individual time-plans. One of the most important conditions to aim at is a reserve of labour-power in relation to the plan: an excess capacity of living labour in relation to the available machinery must be provided for in advance. A socialist right to work would have quite another purpose than full employment with alienated labour, up to and including pre-planned overtime. The most important demand today is for a shortening of psychologically unproductive labour-time, which is not identical with the shortening of labour-time altogether.

The organization of labour must be adapted to the needs of education policy, and not primarily the converse. It is a matter of giving a further active impulse to the production of surplus consciousness, which has already set itself in motion spontaneously. The deliberate aim should be to create a surplus of education, which the scientifico-technical factory system and its superstructure will no longer be able to assimilate in its present social constitution. Thus the attack on the old division of labour will become unavoidable.

Hand in hand with the construction of a differently directed motivational structure will go a harmonizing of economic activity, made possible by measures such as: 1. a shift of priorities from the exploitation of nature by production to its incorporation in the natural cycle, from expanded to simple reproduction, from the raising of labour-productivity to the improvement of the conditions and atmosphere of labour; 2. the development of a technique and a technology appropriate to nature and

scene (minustrial) and small-scale (artisanal) production. The retention of the ruling habits of production would inevitably bring to a head not only the ecological, but also the psychological crisis, which has its expression in the paralysis of labour-motivation.

What shape will be taken by the social organization of the whole of labour and life when the old division of labour has been broken down? In order that human beings may be capable of appropriating to themselves the general framework of their lives, of actually exerting influence on the social synthesis, one must give up the type of centralist super-organization which is hostile from the outset to individuality and initiative. The social framework is bound to escape the grip of individuals when it is organized in such a way that the only people who can act are specialized branch directors, coordinated exclusively and compulsorily at the summit, who issue instructions from on high and forbid the appropriate horizontal cooperation and communication at the base. If a rich individuality is really to be the goal of production, a form of economic regulation must be found to secure concrete individual initiative and genuine communality.

The solution lies in bringing out the federative principle, which is inherent in the well-known idea of free association, and which also characterized for example Marx's option for the commune system of organization. The fundamental units of associated labour and social life must be relatively autonomous sovereign combinations on a territorial basis, which will form microcosms of society. A communal organization of this type could also be the framework within which the isolating separation of the spheres of education, living and work might be dismantled, without allowing the reincarnation of old limitations, restrictions of locality, and exclusiveness. In particular, they would also offer room for forms of communal living, which are in my view the economic foundation for the emancipation of women and a condition for firmly securing to the children a full capacity for education and motivation for learning—for protecting children against the danger of neurosis inherent in the nuclear family.

The organization of society according to the commune principle signifies placing hierarchic regulation in a subordinate position (this is not to be equated with its abolition). It means co-ordination instead of subordination of human beings to their different activities. And it means the linking together of these different interfunctional associations into units which, though complex, are still observable as a whole, owing to their territorial structure. These units will comprise all aspects of the life-process, and no decisions will be taken over their heads. The communes, which are naturally specialized at certain points within the framework of the planned social division of labour, associate to form the national society. And finally, the idea of association between nationsrather than the frightful idea of a hyper-bureaucratic world government -18 already penetrating into modern international law. The mediation to each respectively higher unit could be accomplished by delegates elected from the base. Control of particular interests which overstep the mark could be achieved by establishing full publicity for the flow of

of the individual to expose insulutional manipulations, in pure bureaucratic assemblies customary at present.

This then, in a very compressed form, is how one may conceive the social order in which the conditions of real freedom coincide with those of real equality and fraternity. Communism is not only necessary, it is possible. Whether it becomes actual is a question to be decided in the struggle to establish its conditions.

Political Perspectives

In conclusion, I must speak of political perspectives. How can a communist opposition hope to realize its goals? I first ask this question, of course, on behalf of that minority of existentially engaged human beings who have not attached their hopes to momentary, political conjunctures - even changes in the behaviour of the secret police - and who do not speculate on certain success. In 1922 a book of essays by Karl Liebknecht was published in Munich, in which the author reacts among other things to the slogan that 'politics is the art of the possible'. Let me cite the following passage: 'The extreme limit of the possible can only be attained by grasping for the impossible. The realized possibility is the resultant of the impossibilities which have been striven for. Willing what is objectively impossible does not, therefore, signify senseless fantasy-spinning and self-delusion, but practical politics in the deepest sense. To demonstrate the impossibility of realizing a political goal is not to show its senselessness. All it shows, at most, is the critic's lack of insight into society's laws of motion, particularly the laws that govern the formation of the social will. What is the true and the strongest policy? It is the art of the impossible.' The impossible here means the sum of everything that 'will not work' when taken by itself, but only ir the context of a total transformation of a kind that well-adapted, healthy common-sense does not usually risk thinking about.

The communist alternative aims at a transformation down to the deepest levels of the culture. It has no time for the naive illusion that the opposition only needs to get power into its hands for history thereafte to proceed along different lines. Unlike a comp d'état, the cultural revolu tion cannot take society by surprise. The opposition does not striv directly for power, but rather places its confidence in a long-term growtl of its influence-which depends on the possibility for public and unhindered discussion about its programme and an organization and propaganda of its own. A phase of open conflict between it and the officis scribes and pharisees is unavoidable. The masses cannot attain reaso under the tutelage of the politbureau. People's so-called immaturity i more and more a product of the domination of the apparatus, even if was originally one of the causes of the latter. The programme of culturs revolution is directed, as a kind of modern inversion of ideology, agains the habits and customs of the masses, which tend towards spontaneou adaptation to capitalist civilization. Probably a similar reaction will tak place, after the first anti-bureaucratic impetus is spent, to that alleged t have occurred after the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testamen when the people got into a fury over such teachings. We must recko cracy and subalternity complement each other. The purpose of a patient policy directed at neutralizing compensatory interests is precisely to snap this connection.

There are many people within the party intelligentsia and the circles around it who still their consciences by proving that 'there is nothing one can do', while they rhetorically bemoan the absence of credible / alternatives. In Aitmatow's story 'Departure from Gulsary', the hero says to his oldest friend: 'At some point you ceased to be a communist.' However, anyone who is genuinely discouraged in his convictions by this impossibility should remember the words said in praise of the dialectic: 'The certain is not certain, it does not remain as it is.' One only has to risk asking oneself some radical questions. How long will there be unquestioning acceptance of the sterile 'economic competition' in extracting the maximum—in productivity tailored to capital—for which we are sacrificing everything else? Or again: why must individuals be stimulated to work mainly by financial incentives, and why must they be restrictively controlled? And again: is it really impossible to get beyond diplomatic participation in the so-called balance of terror? What are the interests that prevent us from putting the Western military-industrial complex under pressure by a practical escalation in disarmament? And another question: will the bureaucratic apparatus which rules the Soviet Union not increasingly prove to be a prominent part of world reaction, when its function of backing movements for national liberation ceases to exist after the present final phase of the struggle in South Africa? And then again: where could troops be found to act against a Soviet Dubcek? All these political questions should be thought through anew.

Let us just take the situation with respect to military policy. Every genuine disarmament initiative presupposes today that the progressive forces in both blocs put the power complexes under coordinated pressure, and make an end of the habit of picturing the other side as the enemy. Social changes, in both the capitalist and the non-capitalist countries of Europe, are the precondition for shattering the reactionary universe of the arms planners and disarmament diplomats, and for setting in motion an escalation of reciprocal disarmament. Naturally, the armed forces must at first remain capable of functioning without restriction, during a shift of political power. This was shown to be perfectly possible in Czechoslovakia in 1968. But the next step must be a political offensive to break out of the witches' cauldron of super-militarism, in which mankind's struggle for liberation is expiring.

The relation of forces between the interests of emancipation and those of the apparatus appears much more one-sided politically than it is socio-economically. The reason is simply this, that the tendency towards a subordinate attitude has in its very essence been thoroughly institutionalized; whereas in their human interests individuals are kept in a condition of preventive atomization, as well as being prevented by the police from developing a corresponding political articulation and organization. A communist opposition may, therefore, at first sight appear to lack prospects. But the irony of history wills it that apparatuses which previously could deal with all kinds of communist heresy are helpless as

In reality, this is an entirely new and favourable situation for communist oppositions. We must, of course, free ourselves from the old orthodox-Marxist sectarianism. We cannot learn the path to follow from that opposition which lost the fight against the rise of Stalinism. Every revolutionary communist since 1917 has had Trotskyist feelings at a certain stage in the move away from domination by the apparatus. But this position really does lack historical prospects. We do not want to re-establish old norms, but to create new ones. We are no longer forced to rely on inner-party constellations. Instead, we must consciously base ourselves on the broad social forces which, at once naively and cleverly, hold constitutional texts and United Nations resolutions under the noses of the political police. We do not have to identify ourselves with the direction taken by, for example, Sakharov; and a Solzhenitsyn stands directly at the opposite pole to us. But it is not our main concern to make this dissociation, while we positively seek recruits to our own standpoint. The removal of the dictatorship of the politbureau is the first commandment!

The New Communist Opposition

Today in the Soviet Union itself there is already a new communist opposition, even if a weak and scattered one, represented to some extent by people like the Medvedev brothers. One has existed for the past fifteen years in Hungary, working on strictly scientific lines, and enjoying if not semi-then quarter-legality. One continues to exist unswervingly in Czechoslovakia, where it has only withdrawn tactically to constitutional questions in order to take up from that position the fight for its own legality, which is in fact its most immediate aim. One is growing in Poland, where it is aiming to establish links with the workers and where it has recently attained a considerable degree of broad support and organization. And one is forming anew in the GDR as well. Today, there exists in all the East European countries a considerable Marxist potential. More and more communists are beginning to work consciously on two levels (and no longer just to think on two levels-psychologically, too, this is a quite different quality). The apparatus can no longer find in these circles a Judas for every twelve disciples, and hardly manages it for twelve times twelve. The ideological impotence of the old forces since 1968 is a matter of notoriety. They control a church in which no one believes any more. And they are no longer capable of engaging in discussion. The proclamations they continue to make are hopelessly threadbare, and measured against the minimal Marxist requirements of the intellectual standing of a leadership they are beneath criticism. Only the defensive mechanisms continue to function. Productive reactions are no longer to be met with. The apparatus remains for the moment in power, but solely on the basis of police repression and latent military intervention.

The year 1968 was and remains an important turning-point. For once, in the sixty years since the Russian October Revolution, the forces which are pressing towards a fresh organization of non-capitalist industrial

cechosiovakia it became apparent that there exists in actually-existing socialism in general a progressive bloc of interests opposed to the domination of the apparatus. It became clear, moreover, that the majority of active party members was waiting to set off in a new direction. Finally, what was proved in Prague and Bratislava was nothing less than the capacity of our social order to exist without the dictatorship of a politbureau. The catchword of 'counter-revolution' put forward by Reaction always meant, in the first place, the consistent reform policy itself. It was-and it remains-the greatest political crime committed by the Soviet leadership since the Second World War, that it deprived the peoples of Eastern Europe, including its own people, and the whole of progressive humanity, of the irreplaceable experiences gained by the ripening of the Czechoslovak experiment. German Communists are still faced with the task of making clear in formal terms to the population of Czechoslovakia that they dissociate themselves from their party's co-operation in this act of international bureaucratic reaction.

The Czechoslovak experiences remain encouraging, nonetheless, especially when one goes beyond the national framework in evaluating them. They indicate to the opposition that it must strive for the long-term goal of political hegemony in the framework of the entire Soviet bloc. It is not national differences and animosities which are decisive. What is decisive is the fundamental contradiction between the social interests of all the peoples of Eastern Europe and the interests of their political bureaucracies. Just like the peoples of the Soviet Union, the peoples of Poland, Hungary and so on need a new political order.

The Impact of Euro-communism

In recent years, the strategic position of the apparatuses has deteriorated still more. They cannot deal with the consequences of the Helsinki Conference, in which they had to agree to participate in order to secure economic co-operation with the West. And the danger which became apparent at the Berlin conference of the European Communist Parties is still greater, because the issue here is stability at the very centre of the apparatus's domination. The truth is that so-called Euro-communism introduces the spirit of a split into the East European parties, and into the personnel of their apparatuses—right up to Politbureau level.

As everyone knows, the form of political superstructure under which the anti-capitalist transformations were carried through in Eastern Europe after 1945 was imposed from above on the peoples of that region. Neither in its substance, nor in its form, nor in the point of time at which it occurred, was it the consequence of an indigenous national development The export of the Soviet model originally had a progressive significance, despite everything. It was the anti-capitalist solution which was practically possible. The historical situation did not provide for a better solution in Eastern Europe. But now the role of the post-Stalinist apparatus in the Soviet Union, in its domination over Eastern Europe, consists in preventing the peoples from advancing to the form of socialism appropriate to them. They are thereby driven in the long run into the arms of a political restoration. The increasing nationalism—and

against the fetters imposed by the hegemony of the Soviet apparatus of their internal development. The essence of the problem of sovereignty, its salient point, is for the Eastern European peoples the need to make their own socialist progress as far as possible independent of the differently articulated and far too slowly changing internal situation in the Soviet Union. For they now need not only—like the Soviet Union—readaptation of the superstructure to much more developed productive forces, but also and at the same time the restoration of national continuity in respect of the kind of social institutions they possess.

As soon as there exists in practice a Western European path to socialism. the political process in Eastern Europe will steer a stronger course not only towards a more independent foreign policy, but also, and above all, towards the as yet suppressed reform of institutions. A reaction against the existing situation is unavoidable. The continuity of the noncapitalist path and the stability of peace in Europe require that communists should be ready in good time to give this turn a constructive and gradual form. The Eastern European peoples certainly want political institutions in the spirit of the views of Berlinguer, Marchais, Carrillo and others at the Berlin Conference. If the Soviet superstructure should be incapable of adapting itself to the process of democratic transition to socialism in Italy, Spain and France, the Soviet Union would most probably lose its Western periphery-lose it completely, for it is not possible in any case to retain it with its present-day status of reduced sovereignty. From the angle of the properly considered future interests of the Soviet Union, which the opposition there will make its own point of view, the issue is precisely the preventive relief of the Eastern European countries from their burdens, and the strengthening of their function as reliable partners in economic cooperation and voluntary integration. A servile 'proletarian internationalism' such as could be heard from the tribunes of the most recent SED Party Congresses, because of the anti-Soviet mood it provokes, is much more dangerous to the long-term interests of the alliance than is a temporarily somewhat overcompensatory national communism such as exists in Rumania. The Soviet Union could give the Eastern European peoples an opportunity to get to know the real advantages of the alliance, in particular its extremely far-reaching economic perspectives.

For the opposition which is in process of formation, what matters now is the construction of a counter-position which is adequate to the specific conditions of actually existing socialism, as many-sided as possible, and strategically decisive—so as to compel the bureaucracy to adopt a perspective of open intellectual and political combat. Now the apparatus has had to recognize that different parties can have different standpoints on absolutely decisive problems, it will next be confronted with a demand that it recognize the same thing in the inner life of its parties and countries. The apparatus would like a kind of Peace of Augsburg to prevail: crims regio, eins religio as they said in those days. This course of warding off new ideas and setting up boundaries against them must be actively thwarted. Away with the mentality of non-intervention in ideological matters!

The apparatus still has a certain amount of success with its well-tried tactic of making the articulation of any kind of fundamental criticism within one's own society impossible, and at the same time presenting its expression outside the area of jurisdiction as proof of its alien character. The opposition is given the choice of either keeping silent-and this means being absent politically—or 'serving the enemy'. As may easily be seen, we are dealing here with something the dictatorship itself has offered, because its urgent need is to externalize the internal contradictions and to turn them into something alien. This is the ultimate ideological insurance of the Politbureau's tutelage over society. Let us have done with this, and ruthlessly draw a dividing-line between our loyalty to the non-capitalist base and loyalty to its outdated superstructure. It is extraordinarily important to use all the possibilities of communication within our own country, and if possible to create our own network for that purpose. But we should not be scared to use the techniques of the other power bloc in our political struggle. Whose sealed wagon was it which brought Lenin from Switzerland to Russia, and who gave the green light for that journey? What was decisive there was what the 'German spy', as slanderers called him, drew from his pocket in Petrograd—the famous April Theses, the strategic guidelines for the path to October.

As the years have gone by, the internal, subjective conditions for a more effective formation of oppositional elements have also improved. The first generation not formed by the Second World War is now entering the age of political maturity. There is clearly an increased readiness to take risks with social stability and urge to show a true face to the surrounding world. Those who felt oppositionally inclined right up to the time when the central organ of the party could devote an obituary to their loyal services were not really of the opposition, which is why they held their posts so long. What is still lacking is the initiative to form groups; to join together for a conscious, purposeful struggle. The prevailing situation directly prescribes the proper path. Since we must regard ourselves—in so far as we belong to the party—as statutarily expelled immediately we unite on a platform of our own, we must fall back in the question of organization onto civil rights in general. The constitutional texts promise freedom of assembly and-given that public places are entirely out of the question from the outset-inviolability of domicile. The time is ripe to bring together people who want to involve themselves, without being too conspiratorial, in fact rather with the knowledge and under the protection of a certain interested section of the public. This will certainly at first be a matter of predominantly theoretico-ideological and propagandistic activities, and not of a mass movement. A start must be made.

The prospect of a shift of power within the party, which has many thistorical experiences speaking in its favour, can no longer be pursued solely in the manner of a long, silent and tortuous march through the institutions. The kernel of the new association can only lie outside the existing structure. Quite apart from the expulsions to be expected, the objective locus of a new, changed consciousness is not to be found within

sees as feasible. We must accustom the apparatus to looking an openopposition in the face. It will doubtless have recourse to more than one
method of repression; but circumstances will not allow it to resort to the
most extreme methods. As soon as it comes up against the decision of
even a small group of people to give up family life, wealth and popularity
rather than abandon the goals it places above these goods, the whole
machinery of the apparatus's resistance must fail lamentably. For
example, the 'organs' will not be able to continue for too long to deport
communists who are unambiguously regarded by the revolutionary and
progressive forces in the rest of the world as people completely rooted in
the situation of actually-existing socialism, and conscious of their
responsibilities. Measures of repression will only speed up the process,
and not just because they bring international solidarity onto the scene.
In the longer term, we shall achieve legality for ourselves and a public
presence as a communist opposition.

There are a number of signs that the locomotive of history would like to get moving to the next station. When this will happen is not independent of subjective decisions. It rather depends on the critical mass constituted by a set of individual impulses. Today, in all Eastern European countries, there are large numbers of people who—in spite of the certain prospect of years of unpleasantness arising therefrom—put in applications for permission to emigrate. This shows that it is time the communist minority began to come into the open, in order to achieve a thorough change in the way life is lived here, in the countries of actually-existing socialism.

Translated by David Fernbach and Ben Fowkes

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The Italian Road to Socialism

We may distinguish, schematically, three 'models' of the road to socialism, three types of strategy for transition. The first is the Leninist, or 'classical' model, on which the revolutionary left bases itself. The growth and intensification of capitalist contradictions beighten working-class combativity and increase class consciousness until these culminate in a pre-revolutionary crisis: there is a generalized upsurge of struggles, dual power, a test of politico-military strength, then defeat or victory of the revolution. This was the pattern of February to October in Russia; November 1918 and March 1923 in Germany; 1936 in Spain; and, in a more ambiguous and embryonic fashion, 1973 in Chile and 1975 in Portugal. The second is the social-democratic model. Electoral victory brings a socialist government to power. With the support of the organized masses, this puts into practice a programme of social reforms which add up to socialism. Finally, there is the 'reformist-revolutionary' model, on which the Communist and trade-union left in Italy in the 1960s based itself. A government of workers' parties comes to power and unleashes a lengthy process of transition to socialism. The dialectic between socialist government and masses gradually imposes a series of anti-capitalist structural reforms, which extend over a long

The PCI's strategy is not based on any of these 'models', for the very good reason that such models do not and cannot exist. I reject categorically the idea that there are one or several models of the transition to socialism from which we should draw our inspiration. There are only specific, unique, different societies, within unique, specific and different world contexts. It is pure metaphysics to seek a common model of revolution for all countries and in every context. Is there a classical model of the transition from feudalism to capitalism? Did the bourgeois revolution come about, I am not saying in the same way, but even in a comparable fashion, in France, Britain, Germany and Italy—to say nothing of the third world? If you try to deduce a strategy from a universal model, you inevitably fall into over-generalization and miss the main point: the specificity of a historical situation which requires a specific strategy.

Of course, every society and every revolution are unique. It is obviously not a question of mechanically projecting a concrete revolutionary process ento a bistorically different society and context. But every revolution involves a universal, as well as a specific dimension. At least, that is what Lenin thought about the Russian revolution. There are countless articles, pamphlets and books—for example, the famous 'Left-Wing Communism'—in which he attempted explicitly to draw out the general lessons of the Russian experience in terms of communist strategy. If we look at societies (and world situations) as different as Russia in 1917, Germany in 1918–23 and Spain in 1936, we find revolutionary processes which can nevertheless be theorized within the same problematic and with the same concepts.

We can speak of them in the same language, that of the Comintern. But even in the examples you have given, the purpose of historical analysis is to see what is different. You may employ a uniform academic language, while the reality to which you apply it is entirely heterogeneous. In Spain, there was working-class unity; in Germany, there was division and bitter struggle between socialists and communists; in Russia, it was different again. It is metaphysical to think that these diverse experiences involve one and the same model.

To come on to Italy, let me quote from the preparatory report for the 14th Congress, given by Enrico Berlinguer at the Central Committee of 10 December 1974: 'There is no question of posing a socialist society as our short-term objective, because certain essential conditions for this—both domestically and internationally—are still lacking, but rather of putting into effect measures and orientations which are in certain respects of a socialist type.' So what I want to ask you is this: in what way are national and international conditions today not favourable for the transition to socialism?

There are obvious international obstacles. Europe is divided into military blocs. Each country is conditioned by this; each has 'limited sovereignty'. No country has absolute independence. The sovereignty even of France, a great independent country and the home of national independence, is limited; in the economic sphere by the multinationals and her financial dependence, and in the political domain by the Atlantic alliance. Even if

these global divisions establish a balance of forces, which is a plundy-factor. . . .

It is one which did not operate in Angola.

In Angola the situation was different, not yet settled or organized, the situation was open. . . .

It did not really operate in Portugal either.

In Portugal, I believe that it had a profound effect, notably in the economic sphere. What was wrong with the Portuguese left was precisely that it \(\frac{1}{2} \) did not understand clearly the constraints imposed on revolutionary class action. This lack of understanding has been responsible in large measure for the present outcome of the Portuguese crisis.

In Italy, the main obstacle is not just these external conditions; it is the fact that the majority of Italians are not convinced of the need for socialism—in the sense that we understand it, as a global transformation of society. You cannot make a revolution against the wishes of the majority. Even the Bolshevik revolution, an armed revolution, enjoyed the strong support of the basic masses: soldiers, peasants and, of course, workers. In Italy there is a majority, a consensus, for measures of transformation—on condition that these are not presented, as is often done, with the declared objective of destroying the system. For people do not give a damn about the strategic aims of groups or parties—even those of the Socialist Party. You have the Lombardi wing of the Socialists who say: we must put forward demands designed to disintegrate the system. Well, that is a fine argument! Most workers have every right to say: 'That is your affair; you are revolutionary strategists, so do your job; but I want to sort out my own problems.' So the question we face is whether we can resolve particular problems—of daily life, of work, of the transformation of cultural conditions, of health and so on— and thus advance towards socialism. Then socialism will not seem imposed by doctrinal choice, by violence, but a necessity born of the actual experience of people who come to realize that the economy can only be put in order by planning which sets limits to private enterprise. Socialism is, therefore, a need arrived at freely, with popular participation. It is a majority, not a / minority concern.

After all that Italy has experienced since 1968, in terms of crisis of the governing bloc and growth of the mass movement, how do you explain the fact that only a minority of Italians votes for socialism?²

This precisely proves that the great majority of Italians is not convinced. Antonio Labriola used to say that the formation of socialist consciousness is a difficult process, requiring time—decades. Since the liberation from fascism, Italy has been through a period of great progress. I scandalized

¹ Riccardo Lombardi leads a left current in the Socialist Party

² In the June 1976 legislative elections, the Left—Communists (ECI) plus Socialists (ESI) plus Radicals (ER) plus the revolutionary left slate of Democrazia Proletaria (DP)—won 46.6% of the vote

as they are today. The statement was provocative, but not basically false. So many Italians say: we must defend these gains. Never have workers had as many rights in the factory as they do now; never have they had as many civil liberties. There is more freedom in Italy than in France.

Of course.

What do you mean, of course? It is not at all a matter of course! Formerly, France had a much more advanced democratic régime than post-fascist Italy. I was in the Resistance three years in France and two in Italy. I lived through five years of illegal existence, of armed struggle against the occupying forces, and I really know the situation on both sides. Now we find ourselves with a country which—from a democratic standpoint—is the most advanced in capitalist Western Europe. This did not drop out of the sky: it was achieved by a long process of democratic conquests. So now many people say: we must defend these conquests. Many feel grateful to the Christian Democrats [DC] for conceding such advances. The fourteen million DC voters are not all bourgeois. A large proportion are workers and peasants who, incidentally, are often the most combative and militant in struggles for their demands—and then vote DC. These voters are peasants, white-collar workers, artisans, working people.

Berlinguer's report to which I referred just now closed with the Communist proposals for resolving the crisis. The PCI proposes to the Italian people, and I quote: 'a new stage in the democratic anti-fascist revolution, requiring the unity of the great majority of citizens, with exceptional efforts at work, in struggle, in culture and in creativity, around a series of demands which will achieve the salvation and rebirth of the country and carry it forward. The union of citizens for the salvation and rebirth of the country within a continuing capitalist framework—is that not what communists call a policy of class collaboration?

 $\sqrt{\text{We gave it that name in 1931-2.}}$ To put it bluntly, we were wrong. When the comrades in Germany said during the world crisis that the dictatorship of the proletariat was necessary in order to resolve it, they won votes, but you know where they ended up. On the crucial and burning issue unemployment—they did not prevent Hitler from winning the workless. The unemployed did not give a damn about the dictatorship of the proleteriat, they wanted work immediately; so fascist demagogy was able to deceive this whole mass of workers and young people and lead them onto the dangerous path which engulfed Europe in the Second World War. So now people want to know: what does a party like ours have to propose? Not so as to construct socialism tomorrow on the ruins of the present system, but to prevent the latter's ruin from destroying the living conditions of the workers. So we must point to the concrete and immediate objectives which will enable the masses' conditions of existence in our society to be protected and improved. Woe betide us if we advocate a solution to the crisis whose purpose is to destroy the present system. The far left, which does advocate such remedies, does not have much of an audience; Democrazia Proletaria got 1.5% of the votes and six deputies.

In the case of France, on the contrary, the Communist and Socialist Parties both present the Common Programme as a programme of transition to socialism, and

In Italy we do not have a Common Programme. Not only because the Socialists, at least up to now, have not wanted one, but because we Italians are suspicious of programmes—it is a feature of our political culture. Whereas in France the Cartesian tradition is always pushing you to make everything precise, to put it down in black and white. This is a // cultural rather than a political difference between France and Italy.

But in terms of the analysis you are putting forward, would the PCI in government be able in the foreseeable future to do anything except manage society as it is, while endeavouring to rationalize and improve it, etc.—in other words, anything except behave like a classical social-democratic party?

We are not a social-democratic party, we are a communist party. We do not stand for marginal reforms in the sphere of distribution, but for fundamental reforms in the sphere of production. I mean nationalizations, agrarian reform. . . . The question is not to manage society as it is, but to transform it in a democratic and socialist direction.

Nationalizations?

We are not proposing new nationalizations at the moment. We are not anticipating what has to be done in this field. But when we raise the problems of planning and the dominant role of state industry, it is fundamental reforms, relating to control over the social surplus, which we have in mind. In Italy we already have a vast nationalized and public sector, which we are having trouble managing at present, so we are not suggesting its immediate extension. But although in this respect we do not have a pre-determined plan of an ideological kind, we always have the possibility, at the concrete level, of intervening to limit still further the prerogatives of private property; of reducing the area of the private sector and enlarging that of the public sector. Our whole policy for establishing public control over investment is a policy for structural change, not one for managing society as it is.

But is that policy realistic? In a society which remains deeply inserted within the world capitalist system, with a bourgeoisie which retains its basic hold on the levers of economic and political power, the process of progressive transformation which you advocate can be blocked very easily.

I do not see why. We put forward proposals for change not as the consequence of a prior ideological choice, but as an option imposed by necessity: to avoid bankruptcy. If, at a given moment, Fiat cannot resolve its business problems, as is the case today; and if the question of public control arises, since it is already so heavily in debt to the banking system and to the State; then taking it under public control is not seen as a political choice, but as an obligatory decision that everyone recognizes is necessary to avoid the liquidation of one of the principal Italian combines. All those who are concerned to avoid the collapse of the Italian economy cannot oppose this change in the mode of administration and hence the status of the firm. On condition, I repeat, that this choice

emphasize that every step forward has to correspond to a necessity, remedying some failure of the ruling class to carry out its functions. For then even people hostile to socialism have to recognize reality. The old employer class is bankrupt. There is a powerful working-class force, endowed with a broad system of alliances with the middle strata, capable of providing a new impetus. So this new force will take control of the state and undertake reforms which have nothing in common with those advocated by the old German or Swedish social democracy.

Swedish social democracy too has undertaken structural reforms.

No. It wanted to start doing so some months before its defeat; but for half a century it confined itself to intervening at the level of redistribution of income, and left ownership of the means of production intact. Whereas in Italy a large proportion of the means of production are already in the hands of the state. Of course, they are badly administered. We are critical of the way the Christian Democrats have used them to dispense patronage. But we can fight for a public control of these means of production which would stimulate a programme of development and full employment. And these are already elements of socialism.

Let us be frank: when all is said and done, in Italy a boss does not really have full and complete possession of his property, in the capitalist sense. He cannot, for example, sell it as he wishes, because occupation of his factory, trade unions, municipal, regional and provincial councillors, the state and so on, will obstruct him. Free enterprise, the basis of the capitalist system, is in fact limited by the balance of forces between the classes. One could give examples affecting all aspects of social relations within the firm. This is not codified, of course. It is the strength of the workers' movement, trade-union unity, the bargaining power of the unions, different types of pressures, which push in this direction. Our conception of the path to socialism is very pragmatic: it is founded on a historicist understanding of social revolution as a process which has come a long way and is going a long way.

In France, people have great difficulty in understanding exactly what the 'historic compromise' which you are proposing to the main Italian democratic forces in fact means. There seems to be a multitude of interpretations. So what precisely does this involve?

The word compromise was used by Italian historians to designate the formation of the unified state. The Italian unitary state was not, like the French state, produced by a radical bourgeois revolution. It was born out of a compromise made between the Savoy monarchy and certain layers of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. These elements formed a right-wing bloc which was the core of the new state, and which excluded the popular masses. . . . So this is a notion which is part of the vocabulary of Italian historiography. It is difficult to grasp outside Italy.

All the same, what do we mean by 'historic compromise'? In Italy, there is the Vatican, the world centre of the Catholic Church. We are not the ones who invented it! We found it already there, and are really bound to

political life. At first, it kept large sections of the peasants, norms to all new national state. Subsequently, it organized those peasants in a particular way, making them the mass base for a new political force, which is part of the organization of the ruling class. So there is a Vatican question which is expressed in an organization of the Catholic masses. This organization used to aspire to be the sole party of the Catholics, but // it has not succeeded. We have a great majority of Catholics in our ranks. I myself am an atheist—the old Communist nucleus is made up of atheists. But today 90 per cent of Communists are Catholic. They are like all Italian Catholics: not over-zealous. They remember the Church when christenings, weddings and funerals occur. All the same, without fanaticism, they are Catholics. And precisely because they are not fanatical, they rejected the excommunication of the PCI in 1949. This was a serious matter; there was no excommunication of Communists in France, but there was in Italy.

Well, despite the fact that we fought the Christian Democrats as our main enemy, as the party of the bourgeoisie, the years passed and we saw that ₩ this party still retained strong links with the toiling masses. These masses fight by our side, as I have said, in trade-union struggles—but on the political plane they are divided. They vote against laws liberalizing abortion, divorce and so on. Consequently, the unity which has been achieved at trade-union level between Communist, Socialist, far-left and Catholic workers must also be achieved in the political sphere. And if this is our aim, we have to draw the tactical conclusions. We cannot engage in a fight to the death with Christian Democracy when we want to win large sections of it to united action with us. The struggle must be waged in a particular way, within certain guidelines. Our policy of abstention V15-à-vis the Andreotti government is an episode in this struggle we are waging to achieve an agreement between the three historic components of the Italian popular movement: the Communists, the Socialists and the Catholics.3

This is purely an Italian phenomenon, and I am well aware that it has no place in your perspectives in France. It has no place in the English perspectives either. The English Labour Party rejects proportional representation, while in France you are fighting for such an electoral system and in Italy we are defending it. We must get it into our heads that the workers' movement—not only the Communists and Socialists—has many national characteristics. We are in favour of a multi-national European organization, and the French comrades are opposed. This is not simply a reflection of the policy of the PCT and PCF. It reflects the fact that Italy has one history and France another. You see, I always come back to the question of history. Our line of advance to socialism flows from our history as an old country divided for centuries, endowed with middle strata differing greatly from region to region, which has yet to achieve a real national unity.

³ Since the June 1976 elections, Italy has been ruled by a minority Christian Democratigovernment led by Giulio Andreotti. The government depends for its survival upon ECI abstention on votes of confidence.

of social bases, etc., the quite simply and straightforwardly involves reaching an agreement with Christian Democracy as a party, on the basis of a programme of renewal?

Important processes always develop at every level—at the social base and at the political summit. I have always rejected the simplistic opposition between base and summit. A great historical process obviously needs a broad base of experience, otherwise it is nothing but an intellectual construction. But the extent of this base of experience depends on political agreements reached between the acknowledged leaders of the mass movement. The two things must go hand in hand. If there is a preponderance of initiative from above, this can lead to bureaucratic degeneration; on the other hand, if the role of central initiative is underestimated, we are guilty of spontaneism.

Another thing which does not seem clear is your characterization of Italian Christian Democracy. Obviously it is a composite party, organizing broad popular layers. But this is not very specific; one could say the same of all large bourgeois parties. Moreover, it seems equally obvious that within this party, the power of decision lies with sectors which carry out the policies of the Italian ruling class. Yet your texts give the impression that it is an inter-class formation, a kind of front of beterogeneous forces; and that although today it is the right wing of this front which holds power, tomorrow it might well be the left. In terms of a class characterization, I do not see any difference between Italian and German Christian Democracy, or even—leaving secondary differences aside—the French UDR. So on what do you have your characterization of the Christian Democrats?

In the early days of the Republic, Christian Democracy was the party of // the Italian bourgeoisie. We said this from the start, and I still hold to it. Even today it is led by men who, it is true, carry out policies which correspond to the needs of the big bourgeoisie. Only, this party is not reducible to the German Christian Democrats, let alone to the French UDR. For it has a very long history, whose roots go back to a social reality / which existed long before the actual formation of the party. Italian Christian Democracy is not a bourgeois party seeking to build a mass base, as for instance Gaullism succeeded in doing in France. On the contrary, this mass base existed, in the form of the Catholic movement, well before the appearance of the party—even before the formation of the Popular Party, which was its first political expression in the post-war crisis of 1919-22.4 Moreover, the DC was divided on the question of fascism: one wing went over to fascism, on the instigation of the then 4 Pope, while another maintained anti-fascist positions and hence worked with us in the anti-fascist struggle and in the Resistance.

Thus the DC is not a bourgeois party that succeeded in creating a mass base for its own purposes. No, it is a movement rooted deeply in the national socio-political arena, with an acute sense of its own autonomy, of its particular character, of being at odds with the secular tradition of

⁴ The Popular Party was founded in January 1919 and grew swiftly, especially in the agricultural areas of North and Central Italy, becoming the second real national party after the PSI. Split in its attitude to fascism, it was suppressed together with other non-fascist parties in 1925–6

issue of abortion or divorce, your far-left Italian comrades criticize us bitterly for our moderation and 'slowness'. But our slow approach flows from our conviction that if we fail to take into account the rhythm of political maturation of the Catholic masses, and that notorious social base of Christian Democracy which really is a multi-class one, we will bring about a clear-cut division of the country into two roughly equal blocs and the masses which could be won to the left will be pushed to the right.

Our greatest concern has always been to avoid ending up in a head-on confrontation with the Catholic movement; for such a confrontation would be fraught with dangers for the workers' movement. If the latter commits itself to a test of strength against Italian reaction supported by all its international allies, and marshalling in addition a genuine mass base of millions of sincere people—active in struggles today, but mobilizable tomorrow for an anti-communist crusade if they feel their cultural universe is threatened—then the risk of defeat is clearly very great. If I wanted to make a French comparison, I would take the old Radical Party. It was undeniably the party of the bourgeoisie under the Third Republic, but it had a not inconsiderable peasant base. And this party // participated in the Popular Front.

The Popular Front was constructed around the programme of the Radical Party.

No, not entirely, the Radicals did not support the forty-hour week.

Neither did the Popular Front programme. It was the general strike of June 1936 which forced it through.

No, no—this is an old historical polemic. I would concede that the Popular Front parties had not formulated the programme which corresponded to the Matignon agreement. But the factory occupation movement was led by Communists. At that point the Communist Party played a decisive role. This is part of the reason for its influence among the French left. The point of all this is that the Radical Party was a party of the bourgeoisie, but also of the peasant masses, and that the socialist left has frequently made the mistake of not paying sufficient attention to this latter aspect.

Does your strategy impolve the idea that Christian Democracy may eventually disintegrate or split?

I would merely note that up to now the DC has always succeeded in heading off this danger. But at the time of the last elections, there was an important break, with the inclusion of a number of well-known Catholics as independent candidates on the PCI ticket. However, this is not yet a mass phenomenon. In fact, in spite of the presence of independent Catholics on our slate, the DC retained its share of the vote.

³ The Mangnon agreements of 7 June 1936 between government, employers' federation and trade-union leaders represented a first attempt to end the great strike wave of May-June, but in fact intensified the workers' actions. The agreements were presented at the time by the PCF as a victory to be consolidated

losing ground. The aim being to win the popular base of the party in order to destroy it: in other words, what was known at the time of the Third International as 'plucking the fow!'.

Not at all, this fowl is much too fat. We have the greatest respect for the autonomy of the Catholic movement, because we understand that it is not an artificial construct. It is a reality corresponding to certain deep-rooted tendencies, which go back to the Italian people's past—a past we wish to overcome, but cannot by denying it. It has to be understood, if we are to act effectively upon it. I believe that if at some point a tendency towards renewal develops within Christian Democracy, certain right-wing groups will become openly hostile. And I hope that the split will take place at their initiative, as occurred over fascism: whereas the Popular Party declared itself anti-fascist, there was a right-wing clerical-fascist tendency which went over to fascism, even before the fascists had consolidated their power.

But is it not the case that PCI policy towards the Christian Democrats—which
// might appear designed to give them credibility, since when you say that the DC is a
great popular, democratic party, you are enhancing its credibility in the eyes of the
general public whether you want to or not—is it not the case that this policy did
much to help the DC maintain its position in the last legislative elections?

I believe that a political line must be based upon an objective analysis √ of the forces at work. Are we giving the Christian Democrats credibility? I think they are achieving this on their own, by showing that they can retain their mass base. Italians are not fools. If 14 million of them are voting DC-despite inflation, scandals and misgovernment-they are not doing so because we are seeking an alliance with that party, but for other reasons which we should not misunderstand. They are doing so it because under the Christian Democrats there has been a great improvement in Italian living standards. Italy has seen the greatest progress in the whole of Western Europe. Where there were formerly 5 million school students, there are now 14 million. They may not be getting the best education, but at least they are in school. I myself can remember the time—in Naples, when I was a Deputy—when the majority of militants attending workers' meetings were illiterate! Nowadays all young workers can write and speak, they play a full role in debate. The same goes for many other fields. So we should not under-estimate this progress. Our position is not to ignore these gains, but to point out the sacrifices with which the people has paid for them and to show how modest they are compared with what could be achieved by an alternative policy. Above all, we want to make it clear that defending and extending these advances requires change-and thus collaboration with us, because: without us there can be no change. So our tactics are not designed to split the Christian Democrats; they are tactics of struggle, which nevertheless take the real situation into account. We cannot forge unity in action with Christian-Democrat workers in the trade-union field, only to ignore them later in other spheres.

Western Europe is going to be deeply affected by the developments taking pace at a world level. The high standard of living in Europe derives largely from its position in the international division of labour. It buys raw materials at low prices and sells manufactured goods and means of production at high prices. This situation could not last for ever, and is already coming to an end: the oil crisis demonstrates the determination of third-world countries to alter the terms of exchange. This limits the proportion of world revenue going to Europe. The middle strata and even the working class in Europe must think of their world position in different terms in future. Either we learn to take a socialist, European and world perspective, i.e. proceed to re-organize Europe on // the basis of collaboration with the socialist and developing countries; or there is a danger that the defence of present living standards may be taken over by the right. I believe that there are powerful democratic forces in Europe—not only the Communists, but also the social democrats and social Christians. If unity is achieved between these forces on a European scale, then it will be possible to solve the problems posed by the reorganization of Europe within the framework of a global / economic restructuring. If we do not succeed in this, if everyone takes refuge in national self-interest and corporate defence of their positions, the worst could happen.

That is why, when your Italian friends say to me: 'we must take advantage of the crisis to destroy the system', I think back to the crisis of 1929-31. At that time, there was no Communist solution. There were two ways fout: the fascist or the Roosevelt solutions. Roosevelt brought America out of the crisis and opened the way for subsequent economic expansion. To be sure, it was capitalist expansion. But it was not fascism. So we want to achieve a European development which does not just repeat the American model of 1930, but which is an original creation, worthy of the continent that first gave birth to socialism—and that has unmatched cultural strengths. Even the relationship here and now between the two of us, despite our far-reaching differences, is entirely European—I would even say, Italian I It is characterized by a certain degree of tolerance, and that is a fundamental conquest of that ancient European civilization, so disparaged nowadays, which has inspired and still inspires democratic // thought—including that of Marx and Lenin—throughout the world.

I have the impression that your orientation is based on a particular assessment of the nature of class consciousness today: thanks, on the one hand, to the accumulated defeats of the 1930s, and on the other, to the remarkable growth experienced by capitalist Western Europe in the last thirty years. . . .

And which is now collapsing.

I have the impression you think that the entire European proletariat constitutes a labour aristocracy in relation to the world proletariat, and that as a result it is not revolutionary at the present time.

MeW system. Well, we think that in order to establish a new system, we must start from the present situation: a working class which has improved its standard of living, and above all extensive petty-bourgeois layers whose existence we cannot ignore, because the outcome of the political struggle between left and right depends on how they move. Has the whole Italian working class become a labour aristocracy? Obviously not, that would be absurd. An aristocracy is a privileged minority, and clearly it is meaningless to say that the whole Italian proletariat forms a privileged minority! There are always marginal workers, the permanently unemployed. I was elected Senator for the poorest districts of Naples, with 42 per cent of the vote, without making promises but simply saying: I do not promise to give you work. If we succeed in changing national policy, there will be jobs. If we do not, there will not.'

So there is a great store of energy in the European working class. We cannot confine ourselves to the schema of the labour aristocracy. This energy goes into the defence and improvement of living standards won rafter many struggles—a defence which will eventually lead to the socialist reorganization of society. The working class can defend and improve its living standards providing it does not isolate itself from the world, but confronts the latter's problems, together with the socialist and newly independent countries. This is the national function of the working class, lits function as a hegemonic class, as Gramsci used to say. Not to isolate itself with a perspective of armed revolution, which nobody knows when or how to achieve. And that is what we Italian communists are doing.

Is the strategy of the PCI of a different kind from that of the PCF?

Yes, I believe so. We have two autonomous strategies, which correspond to two very different national situations. I am not saying that ours is better. I think that when people speak of Eurocommunism, they are wrong, because there is no such thing—there are as many specific strategies as there are communist parties. We opposed the re-establishment of a single world centre for the communist movement in Moscowand we are not going to establish a single centre of 'Eurocommunism' in Rome or Paris. I know enough about the history of the French people to recognize that the PCF1s formulating a national policy, which corresponds to certain features which do not exist in Italy, and vice versa. For example, so far as the European Economic Community is concerned, the position $//_{l'}$ of the PCI is more positive than that of the PCF, because Italians have been forced into migrant labour. There are millions of Italians in France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, etc. who already enjoy new rights today because of the existence of the EEC. But the French were never forced into migrant labour, so they do not appreciate its drastic effects.

Heidegger and Marx

Invitations to a 'Marxist' re-reading of Heidegger are repeated today with ever increasing frequency. Since the suit is pressed with such urgency, and we are recommended so reasonably to avoid adopting an a priori stance, we should at least entertain the suggestion. We therefore propose to devote a few hours of unprejudiced reflection to the question. It is fair, however, and only honest to our reader, to recall at the outset a fact of the matter which our petitioners for a Marxisant Heidegger prefer to pass over in silence: namely, Heidegger's adherence to Nazism at the now distant date of 1933. Though one can dispute both whether and to what extent this support has any connection with the substance of Heidegger's thought, one cannot ignore it. Nor can one dismiss it out of hand as an insignificant episode. For that indeed would demonstrate a blind apriorism, in favour of a conception of 'high bourgeois culture' extended beyond all belief. On the subject of Heidegger's relations with Nazism, two documents of particular interest, not least because they are to some extent mutually illuminating, have recently been made public (they have been published in Italy in L'Espresso). One

Der spieger, on condition that it would be published only after his death. The other is a few pages of Karl Jaspers's Autobiography which the editor of that work had again undertaken not to make public until Heidegger died.

Relations with Nazism

Jaspers and Heidegger, the former at the University of Heidelberg, the latter at the University of Freiburg, figured as twin centres for the diffusion of German existentialism into European culture between the wars. In 1933, Heidegger's sudden alignment with Nazism created a breach between the two that was never to be healed. When Jaspers—who politically was a moderate—comes to recall this event, it is with some effort at self-criticism. He recognizes, for example, that he for too long underestimated the dangers of Nazism. He also acknowledges, and it is a cause of self-reproach, that he did nothing to dissuade his friend from the adoption of such an aberrant position; but ultimately one is left with the impression that relations between the two were of too superficial a nature to have rendered any dialogue productive. In March of 1933, after the triumph of Nazism, Heidegger was the guest of Jaspers at Heidelberg. Once again, the two fell to their habitual philosophical discussions and together listened to records of Gregorian music. Only when he was on the point of saying goodbye did the departing guest decide to speak of 'the rapid development of the Nazi reality', declaring that 'one has to become involved'. I was amazed', comments Jaspers, 'and did not pursue the question'. But the ingenuous Professor Jaspers must have been left even more astonished when, a few months later, his friend returned clad in his new official robes as Rector of Freiburg University ('addressed as Comrade Heidegger'), to repeat in front of the students and teachers of Heidelberg his investiture speech on 'The Self-Affirmation of the German University'. As Jaspers testifies: 'In form it was the typical academic speech, but in its content it represented neither more nor less than a Nazi programme for university reform.'

In his 1966 Der Spiegel interview, Heidegger himself denies that his Rectoral speech of 1933 constituted a Nazi programme; it should really have been understood, on the contrary, as a statement of opposition to the Nazi claim to 'politicize science'. He does indeed acknowledge that, in his address he presented his own proposals for reform of the university as an element of 'our great and magnificent awakening' (Hitler had been nominated Chancellor of the Reich four months previously); but his words had been uttered in full conviction of their truth, and he thus had no cause for self-criticism. In substance, Heidegger's idea appears to have been that of an autonomous 'scientific service', that would complete the National Socialist programme of 'labour service' and 'military service', which in Hitler's demented conception was supposed to provide the basis for regeneration of the German nation. Only those well-dosed with fanaticism are drawn towards projects of this kind, and Heidegger can hardly have been immune in that period, if Jaspers was sufficiently struck to fear he might compromise himself if he told Heidegger his true opinion of the Nazi programme. Moreover, without some fanaticism Heidegger could scarcely have addressed himself to the students of Germany in

regulate your lives. The Führer, and he alone, is the present and ruture reality and law of Germany.' To the Dar Spiegal interviewer, who reminds him of these words in 1966, Heidegger replies with evidenmentarrassment that he had realized on accepting the Rectorship that inwould be impossible for him to proceed without compromise. But in thus suggesting that what is only explicable in terms of total intellectual disintegration was in fact a calculated compromise, the philosophemperhaps does himself an injustice.

Jaspers is correct to speak of 'a Heidegger who like others had succumbed to the Nazi drug'; but he is too hard on himself when he puts some of the blame on his own lack of courage in not having told his friend that 'he was on a mistaken path'. No one has a duty to speak when it is certair that the words will fall on deaf ears, and there is no cause to think tha Heidegger would have been disposed to pay the slightest attention to the political arguments of a Jaspers-who, after all, was no more thananother of those philosophy teachers for whom he had such deepdisdain. In this connection, it will be instructive to record an edifying little interchange between our two philosophers of German existentialism, which is related by Jaspers: "How can a man so devoid of culture 28 Hitler hold sway over Germany?", I 25ked. To which he replied: "To= hell with culture—just look what magnificent hands he has!".' Hardly 🕿 dialogue worthy of intellectual giants! The 'provincial' Gramsci would have defined the little colloquy as 'Lorian' and seen in it a confirmation of his observation that 'there is a more or less complete and perfect Lorianism for every epoch and for every nation'. He added: 'It is only now (1935), with the displays of unheard of brutality and shamelessnessgiven in the name of "German culture" under Hitler's rule, that a few intellectuals are beginning to realize the fragility of modern civilization." Today there are once again not a few intellectuals who are inclined toforget this.

Philosophy and Reality

However, it would be foolish to suppose that in making these points we have closed the discussion on Heidegger. For if we record the fact of Heidegger's support of Nazism, and refuse to consider it as a fortuitous or irrelevant incident of his biography, this means only that we take full account of the 'elasticity' displayed by a thinker from whom our Marxisant Heideggerians would now extract fresh mileage. It is, moreover, true that as early as 1934 Heidegger discharged himself of his Rectoral duties at the head of a Nazified university and returned to the closeted world of philosophical contemplation. From then on he abstained from any word or deed that would smack either of apology for the régime or (God forbid!) of criticism and condemnation. It is also the case 'that today Heideggerianism lends no support to any cultural or political position of a Nazi or fascistic complection'.

¹ The reference is to Achille Loris (1847–1943), an academic economist, attacked by Engels in the Preface to Capital II for his vulgarization and plagianism of Marx. For Gramaci, he exemplified 'certain degenerate and bixarre aspects of the mentality of a group of Italian intellectuals and, therefore, of the national culture' (Gh intellettuals a l'organizzazione della cultura, p. 169), to which he gave the name of 'Lorianism'

tacile attempts to discredit the thinker for his deliberate and programmatic obscurity of language, or to bring him into ridicule for those rarified banalities which alleviate the laborious decipherment of his pages (as, for example, when one reads of the 'thing' which 'things' or the 'world' which 'worlds'). Karl Löwith answering the question as to 'why one permits, if it is said by him, that which one would surely never indulge in any other thinker', has already offered us a convincing explanation: Heidegger's influence is rooted in the links that his thought establishes with contemporary historical reality. It is for this reason that it is worth engaging with so irksome a philosopher—who himself acknowledges that his thought has the appearance of 'something disordered and arbitrary'.

This admission is contained in a letter of 1950 addressed to a young student who, having attended a lecture by the philosopher on 'The Thing', questioned him explicitly about the concept of Being, which, as we know, is the fundamental Heideggerian category. Heidegger's reply (which was subsequently published as a 'Marginal Note' to the lecture on 'The Thing' in his Lactures and Essays) is a perfect model of ambiguity. On the one hand, there is a parade of modest declarations: the route that he signals 'does not profess to be a high road to salvation, nor does it lead to any new wisdom'; it is at most only a 'country path' which has already renounced 'any pretensions to produce an authentic work of culture or to represent an event in the history of the spirit'. On the other hand, there is the customary oracular tone, to which any reader of Heidegger must become habituated: 'To think "Being" is to respond to the appeal of its essence. The response arises with the appeal and consigns itself unto it. To respond to the appeal is to surrender before it, thereby entering into its language.' Any outside intervention in this dialogue, which is conducted in a predominantly cryptic language between the mysterious Being (the Deus absconditus) who summons, and its custodian who responds, would clearly be out of place. So much so in fact that, as '-Heidegger warns, it can come to pass that the custodian misinterprets the summons however finely attuned his ear has become in the course of persistent attention to its nuances. This will also allow us to explain the error to which the philosopher fell prey when he believed a 'call of Being' was to be heard in the language of the Nazi Führer.

It was probably not his only blunder. Following the defeat of Nazism, the development of late-capitalist society offered new terrain for Heidegger's meditations. His philosophy came to impinge increasingly upon contemporary reality. Let us hear, then, what this 'custodian of Being' has to tell us about the drama of the modern world. 'Man is mistaken', we are told at the beginning of the lecture on 'The Thing' from which we have already quoted, 'in his obsession with the thought of what might happen as a result of the explosion of the atomic bomb.' In reality, this anxiety is confused and inappropriate, since 'the dreadful event has already occurred'. Man, that is to say, 'does not see that the atomic bomb and its detonation are only the final by-products and ultimate effects of an event that has long since taken place'.

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for it? The reply which recurs in all of the later writings of this implaced of critic of humanism, but more explicitly than elsewhere in the twenty-eight aphorisms that constitute Overcoming Metaphysics,² is at first sight surprising: the sole responsibility lies with metaphysics, which has cast Being into oblivion and shattered reality on account of its 'continuing difference of Being and beings'. In the rarified atmosphere of these philosophical categories, the most disconcerting processes are at work: the 'desolation of the earth' and the 'collapse of the world'. Even when we recall that what Heidegger means by 'metaphysics' is the logical structure of development of the modern world, all this may still seem rather vague; but one begins to understand what he has in mind when one reads that 'collapse and desolation find their adequate occurrence in the fact that metaphysical man, the animal rationale, gets fixed as the labouring animal'. Once given this lead, it becomes no great problem to disentangle the thread of the argument.

One might well call to mind Rousseau's provocative words in criticism of civil society: 'the contemplative man is a degenerate animal'. For Heidegger (who discovered in contemplation the loftiest of human activities) it is not 'contemplative man' but 'man the labourer' who is the 'degenerate animal'. Human labour, which is potentialized by science and technology, insofar as it transforms nature through appropriation of her sources of energy, is the real villain in the history of Being, of which metaphysics is only the destiny. Everything which exists on the earth ('being') lives in harmony with its natural possibilities: only man strives for the impossible, is a being who, in the oblivion of Being, cannot recognize the limits of his own possibility. 'The birch tree', says Heidegger, 'never oversteps its possibility. The colony of bees dwells in its possibility. It is first the will which arranges itself everywhere in technology that devours the earth in the exhaustion and consumption and change of what is artificial. Technology drives the earth beyond the developed sphere of its possibility into such things which are no longer a possibility and are thus the impossible.' An absurd and lunatic enterprise, assures us our sage, who has lived upon this earth 'in order to shepherd the mystery of Being and watch over the inviolability of the possible'.

In the course of this undertaking, in which Being consummates its destiny, the world becomes ever more monstrously unnatural; it is already, says Heidegger, transformed into an 'unworld', a shell left empty by the abandonment of 'Being', the blue-print of an abstract will which in truth is devoid of all power, because it is only a 'will to will' that knows neither subject nor object. Everything becomes a matter of 'technology', and this technology is for Heidegger nothing short of a 'completed metaphysics'. What is meant, in fact, by the term 'technology' is not only 'the separate areas of the production and equipment of machines' (to which he accords, however, a privileged and preeminent position), but 'all the areas of beings which equip the whole of beings:

² An English translation of this work is included in a collection of Heidegger's writings on metaphysics entitled *The End of Philosophy* (New York 1973). Quotations are taken from this translation

one gioss or ideals overlying everything?. Man features in this picture as merely the 'most important raw material'; thus it is, Heidegger adds, that 'one can reckon with the fact that some day factories will be built for the artificial breeding of human material'. Why not? For 'the way in which artificial insemination is handled corresponds with stark consistency to the way in which literature is handled in the sector of "culture".'

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The Impossibility of Change

Even if, for brevity's sake, we pass over other gloomy shadows lurking in these pages of Heidegger, it is clear enough that we are here in the presence of one more apocalyptic version of the romantic critique of capitalism. An analysis of actual existing tendencies in the contemporary world is manipulated until no way out is left. If any comparison with Marx is to be made, this first and fundamental difference must not be obscured But we should also question to what extent and in what terms it is possible to entertain the idea of such a comparison.

Alfred Schmidt, with his customary zeal for philological precision, has taken the trouble to search throughout Heidegger's writings for all direct references to Marx. He did not discover many, and of those which he has been able to trace, the most pertinent, at least in their general bearing, are those which refer only to the Young Marx of the 1844 Manuscripts; to the Marx, that is, for whom the yardstick is still the Hegelian category of alienation. It follows that Marx is only accorded a modest place; he is no more than a link in the chain that connects Hegel to Nietzsche. Hence the limited attention that Heidegger reserves for Marx is in fact appropriate, given that his intention was to grapple with the thought of Nietzsche, whom he found more congenial. But if this is the Marx who is quoted and respected, there is another Marx of whom Heidegger was not ignorant, and of whose presence he is aware even when he does not refer to him This is Marx the scientist and revolutionary, who in his very analysis of the real world seeks to discover the way out from alienation And with respect to this Marx, Heidegger's position is one of direct opposition.

The last fragment of Overcoming Metaphysics assures us that 'no mere action will change the world'. Every change is excluded, because 'the earth remains preserved in the inconspicuous law of the possible which it is'. And it is in order to defend to the ultimate this entrenched immutability of Being, in order to denounce the 'meaninglessness of human action which has been posited absolutely'—to bar the way, that is, to any revival of the philosophy of praxis—that Heidegger finally embarks on a critique even of his beloved Nietzsche. Nietzsche, however reactionary he may have been, did not give up the idea of a transformation of the world, and for this reason Heidegger holds that even his effort to transcend metaphysics remains 'thoroughly caught in metaphysics' and constitutes, indeed, its 'final entanglement'.

Some of the reasons which Heidegger offers for his critique of Nietzsche are particularly significant. 'Finally', he writes, 'Nietzsche's passion for creators betrays the fact that he thinks of the genius and the geniuslike

viewpoint of accomplishment. In this reduction or even creative genus to a simple element subordinated to that same technical apparatus that draws its nourishment from the material productivity of human labour, Heidegger intends to seal hermetically the circuit of the 'way of erring of Being'—that is, of a world without sense that revolves in a void. It might seem as if leaders had 'arranged everything in accordance with their own will'. But this is only an appearance, because in reality 'they are not the acting ones'. They too are cogs in the machinery that assures the functioning of the 'void' which is created by the abandonment of Being and by that planning of being which serves as surrogate for it. 'Herein the necessity of "leadership", that is, the planning calculation of the guarantee of the whole of beings, is required. For this purpose such men must be organized and equipped who serve leadership. The "leaders' are the decisive suppliers who oversee all the sectors of the consumption of beings... and thus master erring in its calculability.'

The key theme throughout this discourse is the transformation of Nietzsche's 'will to power' into an impersonal 'will to will'. In face of a mechanism of such ingenuity, the necessity of class struggle and political struggle is merely apparent and illusory. 'The struggle between those who are in power and those who want to come to power: on every side there is the struggle for power. Everywhere power itself is what is determinative.' Thus 'this struggle is in the service of power and is willed by it'. It is, therefore, not men who desire anything; they are all puppets of a 'will to will' which sets them in motion. No matter who wins, nothing really changes. Marxism can go back to its garret.

The Aesthetic Refuge

Does Heidegger then offer no possibility of salvation? For the vast majority of men, the answer is certainly no. But for the few elect who are attuned to 'the call of Being', there always remains a hope that they will succeed in living worthily, that is 'poetically' upon this earth. This is the message that Heidegger drew from a poem by Hölderlin. In any case, one must avoid any recourse to science, which is separated from thought by an abyss. 'There is no bridge which leads from science to thought', warns Heidegger, 'one can only leap from one to the other'. Heidegger admits (as did Benedetto Croce) that science does indeed have its uses; but it stands on the far side of the abyss, as an integral component of the techniques employed in the control of a world administered in the absence of Being. When he turns his back upon science, Heidegger seeks a refuge in art and in an identification of authentic life with the life of play. If his point of departure is theological (the separation between being and Being is a transparent transcription of the separation between man and God), his point of arrival is aesthetic. The resulting contrivances are often works of considerable taste and erudition, but at times they seem merely grotesque.

In this connection, let us quote once more from the lecture on 'The Thing', which begins with an analysis (in actual fact a series of digressions) on the essence of the jug, a common thing, only to finish with the magic Square, the Geviert, which will disclose the secret of Being as a

the other three. All this is couched in a mysterious and solemn tone; but in the description of the Four (the earth, the sky, the durnitus and the mortals) we find nothing more than a literary commonplace, evocative of traditional eastern mysticism. Of the sky it is said that it is 'the course of the sun, the phases of the moon, the splendour of the stars, the seasons of the year, the light of day and its decline, the obscurity and the clearness of night, the auspicious and the inauspicious time, the movement of the clouds and the bottomless blue of the aether'; of the durnitus it is said that they are 'the messengers of the divinity, who signal to us'; and of the mortals that they are men, because 'only man dies' while 'the animal perishes' (death as the 'coffer of nullity' and the 'cure of Being').

This Heidegger can have no interest for us. What is disquieting, on the other hand, is to discover in his romantic critique of capitalism the presence of tendencies which take shape and are diffused even independently of his influence: the tendency to reduce culture to technology, which forms part of an organic perspective which is totalizing and totalitarian even when presented in pluralistic guise; the autonomization of forms of control, independently of the actual subjects struggling for power, which makes it possible for real struggles to be reduced to mere appearance, so that nothing actually changes; and finally, there is the introduction of the playful element into practical politics, whether the game in question is that of revolution or reform. It is with this practical Heideggerianism that Marxism must above all settle accounts, lest it be subject to its contamination.

Translated by Kate Soper

Democracy and Dictatorship in Lenin and Kautsky

As G. D. H. Cole rightly said in his History of Socialist Thought, after the Russian Revolution Kautsky became the 'principal theoretical antagonist of Bolshevism'. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat, published in September 1918, and Terrorism and Communism, which appeared about a year later, are the two basic texts of the Kautskyan assault on Bolshevism. Moreover, this was not confined to the theoretical plane: Kautsky also played a leading role in the concrete political action carried out by the social democrats in Germany to prevent the proletariat of that country from following the revolutionary road opened up by the Russian working class. The Bolsheviks returned this assault blow for blow. Though still convalescing from the attack of 30 August 1918 which nearly cost him his life, Lenin replied at once to the first of these texts with The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky. Trotsky assumed the task of replying to the second, with a work published in the spring of 1920, bearing the same title as Kautsky's: Terrorism and Communism, and written in the famous armoured train which Trotsky used to visit the front in the Civil War. The fact that the two principal

responsibilities which beset them—to reply so quickly to Kautsky's criticisms was an index of the importance of the issues at stake.*

Kautsky enjoyed great authority among socialists of all countries. After the death of Engels, he was regarded as the most faithful interpreter of Marx's theory. His contribution to the theoretical critique of Bernstein's revisionism, and his other works up until 1910—in particular The Social Revolution, which appeared in 1902, and The Road to Power of 1910placed him clearly on the left of German and international social democracy. The young Russian social democracy was particularly appreciative of his article 'The Slavs and the Revolution', published in Iskra in 1902, in which he predicted that the Russian proletariat could provide a model for the proletariat of Western Europe. In 1906, he analysed the first Russian Revolution in 'The Motive Forces of the First Russian Revolution', essentially supporting the tactical conceptions of the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks. In The Road to Power, he formulated three very important theses: 1, that the era of proletarian revolutions had begun; z. that capitalism had already matured sufficiently. for socialism and, in this respect, one could not talk of a premature revolution; and 3, that war was coming and 'the war is the revolution'.

Kautsky's Centrism

From 1910, however, there began a revolution in Kautsky himself towards centrist positions, marked by a sharp polemic with Rosa Luxemburg. Only a small group of the left German social democracy (Luxemburg, Anton Pannekoek, Clara Zetkin and others) perceived the growing contradiction between Kautsky's Marxist words and his opportunist political practice prior to 1914. Lenin, who was probably favourably disposed towards Kautsky because of his positions on Russian questions, continued to believe in his Marxist and revolutionary credentials until the capitulation of German social democracy to German imperialism in August 1914 made him sharply conscious of the reality. As he indicated in the preface to The Proletarian Revolution and the Rengals Kautsky, his criticisms of the 'renegade' did not begin until after the start of the war. Moreover, these criticisms, like those of the few other revolutionary Marxists, only reached small circles of dispersed and clandestine social democrats in the belligerent countries.

Meanwhile, it must be borne in mind that Kautsky—to use Lenin's terminology—did not take a 'social-chauvinist' but a 'social-pacifist' position. That is, unlike other prominent socialist leaders, he did not collaborate with the government in a 'sacred union' but opted for a pacifist internationalism, arguing for a negotiated peace without

¹G. D. H. Cole. Hustery of Societist Thought, vol. v, part 1

On that day Fanny Kaplan, a member of the Social Revolutionary party, shot at Lenin as he was leaving the Michelson factory where he had been addressing the workers. He was seriously wounded

^{*} The present article was written to introduce the Mexican publication of a volume containing Lenin's The Prelatures Resolution and the Resegode Kantthy and Kautsky's The Dictatorish of the Prelatural

See Der Veg var Macht, Berlin 1910

Marxist minority which, like Lenin, struggled for the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war. This meant that in October, and in the summer of 1918 when his first fundamental critique of the Bolsheviks appeared, Kautsky's prestige as a Marxist was still intact in the eyes of the great majority of European socialists. Thus it was the leading Marxist authority who attacked the Bolsheviks' claim that their revolution was socialist and their ideas and actions a faithful expression of Marxism. No-Kautsky told the Bolsheviks in a rather paternalistic and superior tone—your revolution has a peasant base and can only be bourgeois; to try and take it further is pure Blanquism and adventurism which has nothing to do with Marxism. The proletariat cannot really take power unless it is a majority of the population and respects democratic legality and universal suffrage. All other roads necessarily lead to civil war, to the dictatorship of a party or a Bonaparte. You have got yourself into a blind alley. To get out of it you can only trust in the European revolution. And do not say that the European proletariat has left you in the lurch and betrayed you; you are the ones who have gone off the rails.

The whole affair was particularly serious—and this explains the pressure on Lenin to reply—since the Bolsheviks' excommunication by the 'Pope of orthodoxy' (the expression is Lenin's) came at a time of extreme difficulty and near disaster for the Soviet régime. Six months previously it had been forced to sign the draconian peace of Brest-Litovsk with German imperialism. The Kaiser's troops were occupying the Ukraine, the Baltic countries, Finland and part of Byelorussia. Japanese troops had landed in Vladivostok and threatened Siberia. The Turks occupied a large part of the Caucusus and the first English and French detachments were disembarking in the north, at Murmansk and Archangel. In Siberia and the Volga and Don regions, the armed counter-revolution was organizing its forces. The young workers' and peasants' republic found' itself in the situation of a besieged fortress. It was deprived of its principal supplies of coal, wheat and oil. Hunger was creating havoc, and the kulaks were organizing subversion in the rural areas. Lenin did not hide the seriousness of the situation. In his speech of 22 May 1918 at a Congress of Labour Delegates, he described 'disruption, chaos and disorganization', 'hunger and unemployment', 'shortage of fuel' and 'the catastrophic condition of the railways'. On 27 June, he argued in the Moscow conference of trade unions and factory committees that the country is 'particularly affected by the disaster of famine'. And on 23 July he said to the factory committees of Moscow province that 'These past few days have been marked by an extreme aggravation of the affairs of the Soviet Republic, caused both by the country's position internationally and by the counter-revolutionary plots and the food crisis which is closely connected with them."

Moreover, it was not only the foreign imperialists, and the internal bourgeois and landlord counter-revolution with its parties and military agents, which had risen against the Bolsheviks. It was also parties which considered themselves socialist, like the left Social Revolutionaries. Although the latter had collaborated in the Soviet government until July

⁴ Lenin, Collected Works, vol 27, pp. 399-400, 464 and 545.

benieged rorfress', the activities of the other socialist parties seemed part of a single enemy front, which threatened the very existence of the revolutionary régime. The attempt on Lenin's life—which was part of a series of terrorist attacks on Bolshevik leaders and organizations—brutally highlighted the gravity of the situation. The Bolsheviks answered the white terror with red terror. Until August 1918, Bolshevik policy had rather been characterized by its moderation in the repression of counter-revolution, and especially of the socialist opposition. It was at this very moment that the Kautsky attack appeared. Lenin's indignation is well reflected in the tone of his reply, going beyond all previous bounds in the excess of language which was so characteristic of his polemical style (and which was not, incidentally, one of his strong points).

The Revolutionary Stakes in Germany

What was most serious for Lenin was not the repercussions of Kautsky's attack on political forces within Russia—there the lines of battle-were already clearly drawn—but its effect on German socialism. 'The Russian, Revolution', Lenin said in his speech of 23 July, repeating something held had regularly asserted since the February revolution, was 'only one of the contingents of the international socialist army, on the action of which the success and triumph of our revolution depends'.6 And for Lenin the most powerful detachment of the world socialist army, which could tilt the balance of forces decisively in favour of the world revolution, was the German. The main danger of Kautsky's position was that it weighed heavily on the other side of the balance. In his study of the German revolution, Pierre Broué is correct to emphasize that The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kantsky was mainly written with German revolutionaries in mind.7 Besides, at this time Lenin thought that the German revolution was imminent and there was no time to lose in clarifying the questions which were raised. He did not just set about elaborating a reply, but posed the necessity for the leaders of the German socialist left to polemicize against Kautsky on the theoretical level. Reckoning that the confrontation in Germany could explode at any time, at the beginning of October Lenin decided to write an article containing the essential elements of his reply-to Kautsky; this was published in

Immediately after the October Revolution, the Social Revolutionary party split into a right, S-R party (of which Lenin's would-be assessin was a member) and a left party which collaborated in the Soviet government until the peace of Brest Litovak. The left S-Rs, like an important Bolishevik faction (the left communists), disagreed with the Brest Litovak peace, advocating a revolutionary war against Germany, even though this would temporarily involve the occupation of the country. They argued that this would hasten the European revolution. They resigned from the Council of Peoples' Commissars in March. Around the Fifth Congress of the Soviets (July 1918), at the same time as launching a political offensive against the Bolishevik leadership of the state, they organized an attempt on the life of the German ambassador and attempted a comp against the Bolisheviks which was quickly defeated.

Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 27, p. 545.

⁷ Pierre Broue, La Révolution en Allemagne 1917-1923, p. 128.

Lenin, Callacted Works, vol. 35, pp. 362-3. Lenin posed this task in a letter to the Soviet ambassadors in Switzerland, Sweden and Germany, asking them to exert all possible pressure to this end. In The Communit Movement: from Communit to Communit (Léndon 1975), I examine Lenin's conception of the relationship between the Russian and the international revolutions, particularly the German.

that time Commissar for External Attairs, with its rapid publication and diffusion in Germany.

The predictions of Lenin on the imminence of the German revolution were confirmed within a few days, with his work on Kautsky still unfinished. He decided to conclude it with the following significant words and date: 'The above lines were written on 9 November 1918. That same night news was received from Germany announcing the beginning of a victorious revolution, first in Kiel and other northern towns and ports, where power has passed into the hands of Councils of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, then in Berlin, where, too, power has passed into the hands of a Council. The conclusion which still remained to be written to my pamphlet on Kautsky and on the proletarian revolution is now superfluous. 10 November 1918.'10 Thus, for Lenin, the key point of the discussion with Kautsky was resolved by practice. And this key point—as a close reading of Kautsky's book confirms—was whether or not the Russian Revolution signified the prelude to the world proletarian revolution. At the same time as he condemned the Bolshevik experience in the terms already indicated, Kautsky declared: 'The Bolshevist revolution was based on the supposition that it would be the starting-point of a general European revolution, and that the bold initiative of Russia would summon the proletariat of all Europe to rise. On these suppositions, it was of no moment what form was taken by the Russian separate peace, what humiliations and burdens it placed on the Russian people, and what interpretations it gave to the principle of the self-determination of peoples. And it was also a matter of indifference whether Russia was capable of defence or not. According to this theory. the European revolution formed the best defence of the Russian Revolution . . . (it) would also be the means of removing the obstacles to the carrying through of socialism in Russia which are created by the economic backwardness of that country. This was all very logically thought out, and quite well founded, provided the supposition was granted, that the Russian Revolution must mevitably unchain the European revolution. But what if this did not happen? The supposition has not yet been realized . . . Our Bolshevik comrades have staked all on the card of the European revolution. As this card has not turned up, they were forced into a course which brought them up against insoluble problems.'11 Obviously, Lenin could find no better conclusion to his pamphlet against Kautsky than the simple dated announcement of the beginning of the German revolution, the formation of soviets and the taking of power into their hands. Just like Russia, it seemed.

In The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kantsky, Lenin affirms that 'the mass of workers in all countries are realizing more and more clearly, every day that Bolshevism has indicated the right road of escape from the horrors of war and imperialism; that Bolshevism can serve as a model of tactics for all.'12 (The concept of tactics included then what would today be

Lenm, Collected Works, vol 28, pp. 105-13.

¹⁰ Tbid, p 318.

¹¹ Kautsky, The Dictatorship of the Proletariet, Manchester 1919, pp. 62-4.

¹² Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 18, p. 293.

projectarian masses of the West to follow the example of the Bolsheviks also underlay the conclusion of the Pravda article to which we referred above: 'Europe's greatest misfortune and danger is that it has no revolutionary party. It has parties of traitors, like the Scheidemanns, Renaudels, Hendersons, Webbs and Co., and of servile souls like Kautsky. But it has no revolutionary party . . . That is why we must do our utmost to expose renegades like Kautsky, thereby supporting the revolutionary groups of genuine internationalist workers, who are to be found in all countries. The proletariat will very soon turn away from the traitors and renegades and follow these groups, drawing and training leaders from their midst.'13 Lenin's prediction did not materialize. Schematically, we can say that the great majority of the European proletariat, and in particular the German, followed the tactic of Kautsky and not of Lenin: strict subordination of the workers' movement to the frameworks and mechanisms of bourgeois democracy, gradual progress through social and political reforms, and so on. In short, it followed the road which, forty years later, was to be called the democratic, parliamentary and peaceful road to socialism. Thus the international communist movement which succeeded the Communist International turned to Kautsky without admitting it, and without the vast majority of communist militants noticing, since knowledge of Kautsky's thought was rare except through 'The Renegade Kautsky'.

Kautsky's Heirs

In one sense, this road had already had its first test in the development of the workers' movement and the socialist parties (particularly the German) before 1914. This culminated in the renunciation of the revolution at the very moment when the first great imperialist crisis—the war and its terrible consequences—objectively put revolution on the agenda. The immediate result was that the workers' movement, led by social democracy, played a central role in the recovery of European capitalism and the isolation of the Russian Revolution. Certainly, there was an extent to which the international proletariat protected the Russian Revolution against imperialist intervention, and thus contributed to its survival; but the conditions of this survival were such that in reality they did not secure development towards socialism, but decisively influenced the Stalinist degeneration. The second great test of the seductive Kautskyan strategy was the policy of German social democracy under the Weimar Republic. This was an ideal starting-point. A more democratic republic it would be hard to imagine. The result is well known. Elsewhere, we have analysed the responsibility of the German Communist Party and the Communist International in the rise of Hitles however, as we also said there, it is undeniable that the greatest his responsibility lies with social democracy.14 The road which theorized in 1918 as the safest and least tragic for the conquest & power and the building of socialism led, through the most betrayal in the history of the world workers' movement, to the of fascism and the Second World War. Other variants of

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¹⁸ Ibid., p. 113

¹⁴ See The Communist Movement, op. cit., pp. 127-65.

Republic, which led to the bioodiest civil war in the history of Spaniaho' the harshest defeat of the proletariat; and the politics of the French socialists in the period of the Popular Front, which led to Munich and the Second World War and the collapse of France.

After the Second World War, social democracy passed from the covert Bernsteinism of Kautsky to open Bernsteinism; from the practical renunciation of revolution, concealed by Marxist formulas, to the overt rejection of revolution and of Marxism on a theoretical basis. In parallel, the international communist movement which succeeded the Communist International began to adopt the Kautskyan strategy, in the period of governmental participation which followed the fall of Hitler's Germany. After the parenthesis of the cold war, and especially after the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU, Kautskyism—the parliamentary-democratic and peaceful road to socialism-became de facto (without being recognized openly) the general line of the communist movement in the developed capitalist countries (as well as in some which were not so developed). To complete this brief recapitulation, we should add that in none of the countries where the socialist parties arrived democratically in government and accommodated to the existing democratic system has there been a transformation from capitalism to socialism. We would also add that the covert turn of the European Communist Parties to Kautskyism has not so far had any positive results either—that is no real advance towards socialism—in the capitalist countries where the Communist Parties represent a considerable political force (in particular France and Italy). In the period 1945-7, its policies contributed in no small measure—with the collaboration of the socialists—to the rapid recuperation of European capitalism. At present, these parties appear to orient towards collaboration with the most dynamic sectors of capitalism, to help them overcome the grave world structural crisis through various reforms which do not touch the essence of capitalism. And we should mention, finally, the most recent result, in a period of acute class struggle, of this fetishistic respect for the channels and mechanisms of bourgeois democracy which Kautsky recommended fifty-six years ago as the safest and least tragic road to socialism: the Chilean tragedy. To summarize: in the course of three quarters of a century, the Kautskyan road has not achieved socialism anywhere, and in many cases it has led to catastrophe for the working class and people. Three quarters of a century—an epoch of rapid historical acceleration, of wars, revolutions and social collapses of all types, of revolutions in all the domains of science—are clearly long enough to draw a negative balance sheet of the 'experimental test' of the Kautskyan road.

Lenin's Critique

This brief historical balance sheet brings out something of the truth and permanence of the Leninist critique of the Kautskyan fetishization of democracy. We must disregard the excesses of language and unilateral judgements. These were largely, but not solely, determined by the circumstances in which Lenin was writing. Lenin's analysis demonstrates how Kautskŷ fell into this fetishization: the manipulation of the concept of 'democracy' beyond any class content. Kautsky disregarded the effect

it was on the ascent or in crisis, in evolution or in revolution. In short, he abstracted from the class struggle, although he retained its formal vocabulary. Kautskyan 'democracy' is a neutral structure, an ideal framework for the simultaneous development of capitalism and of the workers' movement. The peculiar thing about this parallel and harmonic course is that the workers' movement always has the advantage, for the simple reason that the golden rule of democracy is the government of the majority. It arrives at this by the no less simple exercise of universal? suffrage. And as the development of capitalism inevitably implies the proletarianization of the majority of the population, so the hour of the assumption of power by the proletariat arrives with the same inevitability. Once achieved, the democratic system built under capitalism serves the proletariat as the best instrument for the construction of socialism. Needless to say, this conception implicitly raises the idea of the neutrality of the state, given that above all democracy is a form of state. This imaginary neutral Kautskyan state itself could as easily be the instrument of the bourgeoisie as of the proletariat. It was easy for Lenin to demonstrate the counterposition of this view both to Marxist theory and to reality.

In The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kantsky, Lenin deliberately concentrated his analysis of bourgeois democracy on a denunciation of those features and aspects which function most clearly as a political, military and ideological mechanism for the domination of the bourgeoisie and other exploiting classes. The same is true of his Theses on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat', presented to the first Congress of the Communist International in March 1919. In both texts, Lenin starts from the fact that what was important to help the proletariat to understand its tasks in the midst of a revolution was not a dissertation, like Kautsky's, on the superiority of bourgeois democracy over the feudal order, but an explanation of its functioning as a system of domination over the proletariat and the working masses in general; and an explanation of why periods of crisis of the system, of revolution, were precisely the times when those characteristics most brutally manifested themselves. This was what happened all over Europe from the beginning of the war. In The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade: Kantsky, Lenin did not forget that the proletariat must use bourgeois democracy in its; struggle; but this is a problem which appears above all in works prior to 1917, and again after 1919 when the European revolution began to fade.

Lenin's evaluation of the usefulness of bourgeois democracy for the struggle of the proletariat is unequivocal. For example, in Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution, one of the works which dealt with this problem most fully, he formulated this evaluation in sharp terms: 'Whoever wants to reach socialism by any other path than that of political democracy will inevitably arrive at conclusions that are absurd and reactionary.' His position did not change a lot in the whole period from the revolution of 1905 to that of 1917. On the eve of the latter, in 1916, he polemicized against the Bolshevik Pyatakov who questioned the

Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 18, pp 457-74

¹⁶ Ibid., vol. 9, p. 29.

other democratic objectives. This calle under the impact of all imperialist war, militarism and the liquidation of democratic rights themselves, in republican countries as well as in monarchies. Lenin energetically rejected this pessimism: 'Through utilization of bourgeois democracy to socialist and consistently democratic organization of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and against opportunism. There is no other path. There is no other way out. Marxism, just as life itself, knows no other way out.' And he added with his sharp dialectical sense: 'To "fight opportunism" by renouncing utilization of the democratic institutions created and distorted by the bourgeoisie of the given, capitalist, society is to completely surrender to opportunism!' In 1920 when, as we said, he saw the disappearance of the European revolution, he wrote his well known Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder, where he energetically combated any 'leftist' underestimation of the different forms of bourgeois democracy in the course of the class struggle.

In short, the position of Lenin on the relation between democracy and the t class struggle under capitalism is complex and dialectical, like his positions on all political problems. He considered that the relationship , must be considered concretely in each case according to its specific parameters. It is not the same in a 'normal' period as in a period of crisis or revolution. In the debate with Kautsky, Lenin did not reject the positive role of the democratic framework for the process of organization, unity and maturation of the consciousness of the proletariat. Because it was concerned with a class of millions, the proletariat, and not with a small group, this process could not develop to the full clandestinely and illegally in a régime without democratic freedoms. What Lenin rejected was Kautsky's unilateral characterization of this framework, which led him to abstract it from any class content and from the concrete situation of the class struggle. As he said, he rejected 'pure democracy'. Lenin's basic objection is that without going beyond this framework, without constantly denouncing its limitations and fighting to overcome them, and without definitively breaking this framework, the proletariat could not become the dominant class.

Firstly, if the proletariat does not mount such a struggle and subordinates itself to the framework of bourgeois democracy, the bourgeois aspect of this framework is allowed to operate unhindered. Thus it is able to discipline and integrate the proletariat, and to model it ideologically. When the system enters into crisis, the proletariat is not prepared for the revolution, but for the re-establishment of the 'normal' process in alliance with the bourgeoisie. In the second place, precisely because the proletariat can advance the process of its formation as a revolutionary force under bourgeois democracy, the break with the bourgeois democratic framework is inevitable. When it sees its fundamental interests challenged, the bourgeoisie itself does not hesitate to resort to 'great measures' (army, police, provocations, demagogy, etc.). These form a permanent part of the system—something about which Kautsky is silent. However, they remain hidden on a secondary level during a 'normal' period, which makes it easier for Kautsky's silence about them

¹⁷ Ibid., vol. 23, pp 27 and 26.

experience of the functioning of bourgeois democracy in 'abnormal' circumstances. As Lenin said in The Proletarian Repolation and the Renegade Kautsky, 'The more highly developed a democracy is, the more imminent are pogroms or civil war in connection with any profound political divergence which is dangerous to the bourgeoisie.'18 And Lenin illustrates this thesis—which he calls a 'law' of bourgeois democracy with a series of contemporary examples. The series could be extended to our time with many more. The fatal risk for the proletariat, before whichthe Kautskyan argument disarms it, does not rest in developing democracy, as certain leftists would argue, but in developing it in a bourgeois manner (believing in the 'pure', neutral character of democracy); and in continuing to limit itself to the normal democratic channels and mechanisms, while the bourgeoisie changes its methods and brings its 'great measures' into play. 'While the preparatory work for the proletarian revolution, the formation and training of the proletarian army H were possible (and necessary) within the framework of the bourgeoisdemocratic state', said Lenin, referring to the previous period, 'now that we have reached the stage of "decisive battles", to confine the proletariat to this framework means betraying the cause of the proletariat, means being a renegade.'19

A Limitation of Lenin's Critique

Despite these opinions, and many others we could add on the necessity of bourgeois democracy for the full expansion of the workers' movement under capitalism, it is at least possible that the leader of the Russian Revolution did not grasp the full significance of one essential aspect of the relationship between the workers' movement and democracy in the 2 capitalist countries of Western Europe. (This limitation can be adequately explained by the characteristics of Russian historical development, which was the essential parameter of the way that Lenin saw Marxism.) We are referring to the profound roots of the Western workers' movement in this democracy, which, though bourgeois, is no less a conquest of the working-class movement. It is the fruit of a long history of class struggle for democracy, marked by victories and defeats in turn. This necessity for democracy as the most favourable framework for the workers' class struggle under capitalism, which Lenin stressed to the Russian revolutionaries before 1917 and to the leftist groups in the Communist International from 1920, was (and is) a necessity which is perfectly : understood by the great masses of the Western proletariat. Even half a century ago, this was second nature to the proletariat. The first political party of the working class, the Chartists, was formed in the first half of the last century around a struggle for the right to vote of the working masses. From the very beginning, Marx and Engels inseparably united the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism. Bourgeois democracy in the twentieth century is neither inherent to the needs of √ capitalist development, nor a simple conquest of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against feudalism. It is to a considerable extent, if not decisively, a product of the class struggle between the proletariat and the

¹⁰ Ibid., vol. 28, p. 245.

¹⁹ Ibid, pp 261-2.

this struggle. In this sense, it is not limited to a certain form or state—though the state is the principal thing—but includes the various forms of organization of the workers' movement and the other oppressed sections of society in a sort of antagonistic co-existence. Perhaps this aspect does not appear with sufficient clarity in Lenin. And sometimes he manipulates the concept of 'bourgeois democracy' too abstractly against the abstract manipulation of 'pure democracy' by Kautsky.

We have noted elsewhere that the insufficient perception of this aspect of the relationship between the workers' movement and bourgeois democracy in Western Europe could explain the excessive optimism with which Lenin foresaw the European proletariat breaking with its 'treacherous' leaders and following the 'Bolshevik tactic'. The reestablishment of democracy, practically liquidated during the war years. with relatively radical characteristics—abolition of the monarchy and institution of the republic, certain social reforms, etc.—was an extremely attractive objective for the German proletariat. And something similar, depending on the precise contradictions, happened in the other belligerent countries of advanced capitalism. A strategy of deepening the revolution towards socialism must start from this basic fact—the concrete historical experience and consequently the political and ideological formation of the Western proletariat. In reality, the movement quickly demonstrated that Bolshevism could not serve as a tactical model for all. On the other hand, there was the soviet form of organization which had been a spontaneous creation of the Russian proletariat in conditions of revolutionary crisis, first in 1905 and later in 1917. This embodied the political and economic moment of the class struggle, its immediate objectives and its tendency to transform itself into the dominant class. This spontaneous creation of the Russian proletariat was adopted and transformed by the workers of the West in every country where the crisis provoked by the war overflowed into a revolution or a revolutionary situation (though practice also showed that the existence of the soviet form by itself did not guarantee an outcome of the struggle favourable to the proletariat). Thus was born a new type of democracy.

Kautsky and the Soviets

The impact of the soviets on the Western proletariat was reflected in Kautsky's work itself, which paid tribute to the 'great and glorious history of soviet organization' and declared that 'a more important period lies before it, and not in Russia alone', because 'everywhere it is apparent that the usual methods of the political and economic struggle of the proletariat are not sufficient to cope with the enormous strength at the disposal of finance capital in the economic and political spheres'. In But at the same time Kautsky declared himself against the transformation of the soviets into the state power, and did not characterize the soviet political system instituted by the October revolution as the dictatorship of the proletariat. Kautsky was only prepared to use the term dictatorship of the

See The Community Movement, pp. 16-62

¹¹ Kautsky, The Declatorship of the Proletariat, p. 71

times). For him, it was simply the 'state of things' as a result of which the proletariat arrives at being the majority and, through universal suffrage, conquers political power in the democratic state. Objectively, this is the inevitable product of capitalist development. Subjectively, it is the product of the conscious action of the proletariat and its organizational, as well as political and ideological, maturity. In fact, this is the sole theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat to emerge from a work apparently dedicated to this theme, and indeed entitled . . . The Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

As he could not illustrate his thesis with any positive example (and half a century later it is still impossible to find an example), Kautsky illustrated it with what he considered to be the example ab absurdo: the soviet system. The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly; the removal of the right to vote from members of the overthrown, exploiting classes; the election of superior soviet organs through second, third or fourth stages of election; election on the basis of place of work and not territorially; the prohibition of bourgeois political parties and later of non-Bolshevik socialist parties; the sociological composition of the population—with its overwhelming peasant component—which according to Kautsky, if soviet law were to be applied systematically, would lead not to a proletarian dictatorship, but to a dictatorship of the peasantry: the conjunction of these and other elements of the soviet system were noted and commented on by Kautsky to motivate the conclusion that this // system was a dictatorship not of the proletariat, but of a party which at most represented a fraction of the proletariat. Thus a political form which did not derive from universal suffrage could not be the dictatorship of the pròletariat.

According to Lenin, the basic reason for Kautsky's opposition to the conversion of the soviets into the state organization, and for his refusal to recognize in them the dictatorship of the proletariat, lay in his rejection of revolutionary violence and his attempt to avoid the necessity of violent revolution under the military and bureaucratic conditions of capitalism in its imperialist stage. These conditions, Lenin thought, negated the hypothesis formulated by Marx in 1872 that in the United States and England the workers could reach socialism by peaceful means. In the epoch of imperialism, the revolution must be through armed struggle, insurrection and civil war-and not just on a national scale, but internationally. Therefore, the dictatorship of the proletariat could not be conceived of independently of these objective conditions, which determine its configuration and functioning. Lenin observed that the pacifism of Kautsky did not allow him even to consider the possibility that, when the exploiting classes were being displaced, they might resort f to arms or violence rather than respect the decision of universal suffrage. The transformation of the pre-October soviets into the dictatorship of the proletariat was not the result of a Bolshevik plan, said Lenin, but of the struggle between the revolution and the counter-revolution. The Bolsheviks understood the needs of this struggle and acted in consonance with them. They did not invent them.

problem of the revolution. It was essential to know whether of not all revolution was on the agenda for Europe and the world in 1918; whether this revolution, given the concrete conditions in which it emerged, could advance and win in any other way than through violent confrontation; whether the régime, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which came out of this revolution could repress the inevitable attempts by the defeated classes towards regaining their lost paradise. Only by approaching the problem in this way, from the real state of the movement, was it possible to clarify certain aspects of the global revolutionary process in each concrete phase of the class struggle. For example, what sort of democracy was needed and how much? What sort of dictatorship and how much? The basic problem was whether or not you were on the side of the revolution.

According to Lenin, the key to Kautsky's position was his renunciation of the revolution. He did not start from reality, but from a predetermined pacifist and 'liberal' conception of democracy as much as of dictatorship. As the effective process of the class struggle did not conform to this schema, Kautsky had to maintain that the hour of the proletarian revolution had not arrived. The Russian Revolution, he argued, was not a proletarian but a bourgeois revolution—the Russian 1789. In wanting to convert it into the proletarian revolution, and in wanting to impose the dictatorship of the proletariat on an overwhelmingly peasant country, the Bolsheviks had provoked a civil war and created an intolerable situation. In place of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in order to prevent a peasant dictatorship, what had come about was the dictatorship of one party, even a group, which could only sustain itself by the liquidation of all democracy and finally lead to a Bonapartist dictatorship. Kautsky considered that, in reality, capitalist productive relations had not been displaced, their agents had merely been replaced by others of proletarian origin. The agrarian revolution, on the basis of the cession of land to the petty proprietors, had only created an objective basis for the reproduction of capitalist relations, erecting an insuperable obstacle to a socialist transformation.

Renunciation of Revolution

Well, what did Kautsky's renunciation of the revolution, which caused Lenin to brand him with the epithet 'renegade' or even 'traitor', actually mean? From 1914, Kautsky 'reneged' in practice some of his previous theories on the relationship of the coming imperialist war to the proletarian revolution; on the disappearance of the risk of premature revolution in the industrialized capitalist countries; on the way in which the proletariat should respond to the imperialist war, and so on. These 'renunciations' were, of course, not insignificant, and taken together they meant, in practice, rejection of the revolution which was coming onto the agenda. On the other hand, Kautsky's conception of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, which constituted the theoretical basis of his attack on the Bolsheviks and the October revolution, does retain one aspect of his former positions. It is not accidental that Kautsky should have included in The Dutatorship of the Proletariat an extensive and crucial extract from The Road to Power, which

algueu for this so-called peaceful method of class struggle, which is confined to non-militant methods, Parliamentarism, strikes, demonstrations, the Press, and similar means of pressure', leading to the conclusion that 'in all places where democracy is established... the social revolution of the proletariat will assume quite other forms than that of the middle class, and that it will be possible to carry it out by peaceful, economic, legal and moral means, instead of by physical force'. On the line following this revealing quotation of his point of view in 1909, Kautsky wrote: 'The above is my opinion today'."

All Marxists, from Marx and Engels to Kautsky and Lenin, had thought that the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat would be the democratic and parliamentary republic. Marx's reflections on the Paris Commune were not subsequently developed; they were forgotten. Lenin did not begin to argue for the soviet form until the beginning of the revolution of 1917. It was not theory which led Lenin to this new conception, but the new reality created by the revolutionary temperament of the masses. He returned to Marx and the Paris Commune when he was obliged to polemicize with the traditional position and give the new position a Marxist theoretical foundation (in The State and Revolution and other works from the months which preceded October).

Kautsky's idyllic vision of the socialist revolution flowed from the deadening practice of the workers' movement in the long period of relatively peaceful and prosperous capitalist development. This practice induced Kautsky and other Marxists to hypostasize the profound democratic spirit which pervades all Marx's theory of the revolution—as much with respect to the forms of struggle of the working class under capitalism as with respect to the forms in which it would exercise its class domination. They hypostasized this democracy, isolating it from its class content, conceptualizing it into an entity outside time and space—an all-powerful regulator of the class struggle, not subject to its contingencies. Hypostasis of the democratic principle is united in Kautsky (in common with most of the theoreticians of the Second International) with hypostasis of the economic principle, so that each mutually justifies the other. This is most fully developed in the theory of ultra-imperialism.

According to the Kautsky conception, at the same time as the economic development of capitalism automatically creates the material conditions for socialism, the development of bourgeois democracy (possible thanks to economic development, and vice versa) automatically creates its political conditions. Political revolution is the ripe fruit which falls from the tree of the social revolution once it has sunk its roots everywhere in the capitalist soil, preparing it fully for the qualitative change and rendering it powerless to engender any defensive reaction. Within this conception, the war of 1914–18 was no more than a parenthesis of blood

See Kautsky, 'Ultra-impenalism', NLR 59, January/February 1970

[™] Ibid , pp 37—8

In his article 'On the slogan for a United States of Europe', published in August 1915, In Lenin wrote. "The political form of a society wherein the proletariat is victorious in overthrowing the bourgeoisie will be a democratic republic' (Callectal Works, vol. 21, p. 342)

fact, the crisis of the capitalist system and the flowering of the proletarian revolution took a barbarous and bloody form. Kautsky used this economistic parliamentarist and pacifist conception of how the socialist revolution must be to deny the real revolution in practice; and he contributed to extinguishing it in Germany, its principal European focus. Lenin, on the other hand, took part in the effective, concrete revolution, modifying his previous theoretical positions in accordance with it and concentrating the whole weight of the party to develop it to its final conclusions.

The Fate of Soviet Democracy

Applying this method, Lenin modified and completed his conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which was as complex and dialectical as V his conception of democracy. Its central thrust was to see dictatorship of the proletariat as the product of a given phase of the class struggle in conditions of revolution: the phase of the overthrow of the exploiting classes, the conquest of power by the proletariat, and the use of this power to repress the counter-revolutionary manoeuvres of the displaced classes and to initiate the construction of socialism. In so far as it is a product of this process, the dictatorship of the proletariat has two inseparable aspects: dictatorship for the exploiters and reactionaries, democracy for the workers. In his reply to Kautsky, Lenin motivated the necessity and content of each of these aspects. Lenin's position in relation to the first is evidently correct and convincing: daily reality (right up to the present day) sharply contradicts the bucolic framework for the class struggle which underlay the Kautskyan strategy. So far as the second aspect is concerned, however, it is more questionable whether Lenin's arguments v and assertions coincided with reality. In his pamphlet against Kautsky, Lenin described a proletarian democracy which implied effective democratic rights for the vast majority of the population, and whose functioning and structures allowed an intervention and control on the part of the masses which would be impossible in the most advanced of bourgeois democracies. There is no doubt that the democracy thus described would be effectively far superior to the most advanced bourgeois democracy. But the problem is whether this description & accurately reflected the reality of the Soviet system.

When Lenin wrote this text, the Bolshevik party monopolized power and was the only completely legal party in the country and in the soviets. The other socialist parties—Social Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and Anarchists, not to mention the bourgeois parties—were de jure or de facto illegal or semi-legal, except for small groups, and had been eliminated from the soviets. The working masses who followed these parties—comprising not inconsiderable sections of the working class and a mass of poor and middle peasants—remained, if not totally excluded from soviet democracy, at least in a subordinate position. At the same time, the imperatives of civil war—militarization, iron discipline, draconian measures—had limited the democratic functioning of the soviets. The apparatus of the soviets—and still more the apparatus of the party—had replaced the elected organs as the real power. Although the responsibility

for assessing the effective level of democracy in the soviet system at this time.

A more serious sympton, however, is the fact that Lenin did not appear worried by the negative effects that the process of militarization (using this term to sum up a whole complex of phenomena) and the illegalization of other social tendencies might have on the effective development of soviet democracy. Certainly, in later years, Lenin more frequently expressed his disquiet with the evolution of the Soviet state, with its growing bureaucratization and distance from the masses. But when it came to finding a remedy, Lenin did not seem to consider that one of the ✓ principal causes rested in the lack of political freedom in the soviets and in Russian society as a whole. Everything seems to indicate that, in his opinion, the theoretical and political capacity of the party, and in particular of its leadership, could compensate for the liquidation of proletarian democracy. In fact, however, the evolution of the situation confirmed the prescient judgement which Rosa Luxemburg penned in sail in the summer of 1918, practically at the same moment that Kautsky and Lenin produced their counterposed texts: 'with the repression of political' life in the land as a whole, life in the soviets must also become more and more crippled. Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which only f the bureaucracy remains as the active element. Public life gradually falls asleep, a few dozen party leaders of inexhaustible energy and boundless experience direct and rule. Among them, in reality only a dozen outstanding heads do the leading and an élite of the working class is invited from time to time to meetings where they are to applied the speeches of the leaders, and to approve proposed resolutions unanimously—at bottom, then, a clique affair—a dictatorship, to be sure, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, but only the dictatorship of a handful of politicians, that is a dictatorship in the bourgeois sense, in the sense of the rule of the Jacobins." the

As we can see, the revolutionary Luxemburg essentially agrees with the 'renegade' Kautsky in foreseeing the dangers which lay in wait for the evolution of the régime, if it persisted in the suppression of political freedom. Luxemburg, unlike Kautsky, did not deny the necessity for revolutionary violence, and understood perfectly that it is difficult to avoid situations of emergency in the course of the revolution. Unlike Kautsky, she was on the side of the October Revolution, was for its unconditional defence, and admired the revolutionary audacity and energy of the Bolsheviks. Unlike Kautsky, she believed that the German socialist revolution was on the agenda; and with the Spartacist group, which became the Communist Party of Germany at the end of 1918, she fought to bring it about at the cost of her life. But her Marxist foresight also allowed her to understand the inevitable consequences of converting methods which are justified in conditions of emergency into a system of government and political life. The dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of socialism are incompatible with such methods.

See Mary-Alice Waters (ed.), Rasa Luceamburg Speaks, New York 1970, p. 391

system degenerated and what was the nature of the social system which emerged from that degeneration. Debate and investigation on this subject began with the first initiatives of the new régime, as is well indicated by the texts of Lenin and Kautsky which we have been discussing—and by others of the same period, particularly the one we have quoted by Luxemburg. The debate still continues today. Not only has it not finished, but at present it is gaining new vigour. No doubt this is because a Marxist understanding of this enormous and tragic experience is of vital importance for any progress in the struggle for a free and fraternal A communist society. This is the only real alternative to technological barbarism. We cannot enter into this debate, but must limit ourselves to establishing that in the present system, which its leaders present as developed socialism, the division into dominant and dominated persists, these categories, particularly the dominant, have structural and functional characteristics distinct from those of classes in capitalist society. The basic condition for socialism does not exist: that the workers should be the effective masters of the means of production and their living conditions (and not just because the constitution formally proclaims it, which would even be possible in bourgeois society). This cannot obtain without a true, unrestricted political and social democracy. The most superficial, empirical observation will tell you that this does not exist in the ussa.

The Kautskyan road to socialism—parliamentary, democratic and peaceful—has led to defeats and catastrophe for the workers' movement, disarming it against fascism and war. While this road, adopted by the Communist Parties after the Second World War, has not led to socialism anywhere, the regime which Lenin defended against Kautsky's attacks as the first historical incarnation of the dictatorship of the proletariat has evolved in the direction of a new class society. It seems, then, that history is playing one of its tricks. It justifies Lenin against Kautsky and Kautsky against Lenin. But behind this paradox there lies a profound truth, a lesson which all revolutions—and periods between revolutions—teach the proletariat. One will not win with democracy alone, one will not become the dominant class and advance towards the classless society. But without democracy, one will lose even when one thinks one is winning; for from one's own ranks a new ruling and exploiting class will tend to emerge.

Obviously, it is easier to be conscious of this antinomy than to find the method of overcoming it in practice. We depend on the historical conditions of each historical epoch, of each concrete conjuncture nationally and internationally. Although a new practice and a better theoretical understanding of the new conditions are essential to arrive at a solution, both require an enrichment of the memory of the workers' movement and an understanding of past debates and experiences. This must not be from only one point of view, as is common in the good sectarian tradition of a certain 'Marxism-Leninism', but must use texts from all sides. It is, therefore, appropriate to rediscover a series of works on the theoretical principles of classical social democracy which, until now, have been condemned to oblivion or specialist study. Their successes and failures are the expression of a whole historical stage of

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two texts which we have been considering here should be read and can be of use. The problems discussed in 1918 by the two greatest representatives of the two principal currents of Marxist inspiration in the workers' movement are more relevant than ever, although we are in a new situation, with great changes compared with a half century ago. For this is also a situation of acute crisis of the world capitalist system, which poses the workers' parties and organizations with historic choices, on which depend in large measure whether capitalism will be able to recover once more, at the cost of the exploitation and suffering of the working masses of the whole world, or whether it will be obliged to give way before a new type of social development leading to communism.

Translated by Rubard Career

Acknowledgments

The discussion with Giorgio Amendola is translated from a volume of interviews carried out by Henri Weber with Italian Communist leaders, Parti Communiste Italian and sources de l'Eurocommunisme, Paris 1977. It is reprinted here with thanks

The article by Valentino Gerratana first appeared in Researche, 29 July 1977, and is translated here with our appreciation.

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THE ISAAC DEUTSCHER MEMORIAL PRIZE ANNOUNCEMENT

The undersigned members of the Jury of the Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize wish to announce that the Prize for 1977 to the value of £100 has been awarded to S S Prawer for his book *Karl Marx and World Literature*.

The author is Taylor Professor of German Language and Literature at the University of Oxford, former Hon. Director of the University of London Institute of Germanic Studies, and holder of the Goethe Medal, 1973. Professor Prawer is also the author, among other works, of German Lyric Poetry (1952), Heine, the Tragic Satirist (1962) and Comparative Literary Studies: an Introduction.

The Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize for 1978 will be awarded in the autumn of 1978, and a jury drawn from among the sponsors will be glad to consider work published or in typescript. Any such works should be submitted by 1 May 1978 to the Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize, c/o Lloyds Bank, 68 Warwick Square, London SW1.

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Engels and the Genesis of Marxism

Since his death in London in 1895, it has proved peculiarly difficult to arrive at a fair and historically balanced assessment of Engels's place in the history of Marxism, both within the Marxist tradition and outside it. Engels was both the acknowledged co-founder of historical materialism and the first and most influential interpreter and philosopher of Marxism. Yet, since at least the break-up of the Second International, he has been persistently treated, either simply as Marx's loyal lieutenant, or else as the misguided falsifier of true Marxist doctrine. The continued prevalence of these rather stale alternatives cannot be attributed to the lack of an adequate scholarly basis on which Engels's career could more imaginatively be judged. On the contrary, Engels was magnificently served by one of the best of twentieth-century scholarly biographies, that of Gustav Mayer, the product of over three decades of research and a scarcely rivalled knowledge of nineteenth-century German labour and socialist history. But Mayer's work has remained little studied, indeed virtually unknown until its republication in the last decade. Because Mayer was not a Marxist, his research went virtually

contined himself to a painstaking descriptive reconstruction of Engels's life and work, and ventured few judgements of his own. He was also unlucky in the timing of his biography. The first volume appeared in 1918, at a time when the attention of German socialists was deflected by the end of the war and the splits of the November revolution. The second volume appeared at the end of 1932 and was almost immediately suppressed by the incoming Nazis. Even in the German-speaking world, the book almost immediately became a bibliographic rarety; and it was never translated, except in an extremely truncated version. It thus remained the restricted possession of a few specialized scholars in the post-war period.

One-sided Critics

But the one-sidedness of most modern treatment of Engels was not solely or even principally the consequence of the mishaps of Mayer's book. For, from at least the end of the first world war, assessment of Engels's particular contribution to Marxism had become a highly charged political question. After a period of unrivalled prestige between the 1880s and 1914, Engels's reputation suffered first in the revolutionary leftist critique of the failings of the Second International and subsequently in the non-communist or anti-communist critique of the excesses of the Third.

It was Lukács and to a lesser extent Korsch, in the revolutionary period following the Russian Revolution, who drove the first effective wedge between the theory of Marx and that of Engels.2 In a respectful but ominous critique of Engels's Anti-Dübring, Lukács from a radical Hegelian standpoint attacked Engels's preoccupation with a uniform dialectic linking human and natural history, and in particular his distinction between 'metaphysical' and 'dialectical' science, on the grounds that it obscured the truly revolutionary dialectic within Marx; that between subject and object within human history. This criticism was not merely epistemological. For in Lukács's eyes, the prestige of Darwin and evolutionary science within the Second International was intimately bound up with an undialectical separation of theory and practice, and hence the immobilism and reformism of its politics. Although Lukács's critique had little immediate impact, and he himself later retracted it, it was a prefiguration of the form taken by many later attacks. Dialectical materialism-Plekhanov's term for a Marxist philosophy and a general view of the world-was largely constructed from Engels's later writings, and once this philosophy received the official imprimatur of the Soviet Union, it became difficult to differentiate an attitude to Engels from an attitude to the Communist positions of the

¹ Gustav Mayer, Fredrich Engels, Eine Beographie, 2 Vola, 1932; reprinted Cologne 1969. Among other biographical studies of Engels, see A. Cornu, Karl Marx at Fredrich Engels, lear sit at lear searce, 4 Vola, Paris 1954—; H. Ullrich, Der junge Engels, Berlin 1961; SED, Fredrich Engels, Eine Biographie, Berlin 1970, H. Hirsch, Engels, Hamburg 1968, H. Pelger (ed.), Fredrich Engels 1820–1970. Referate, Diskussense, Dokumente, Hanover 1971, W. Henderson, Frederick Engels, 2 Vola, London 1976.

²G. Lukáca, History and Class Constroumus, London 1971, Karl Korsch, Marxim and Philosophy, London 1970

Stalin's attempt to impose a dialectical materialist orthodoxy upon natural scientists. On the other hand, it was the social democrats, Landshut and Meyer, who first published a version of Marx's 1844 Manuscripts in an effort to pit an ethical humanist Marx against a Leninist interpretation of Marxism. The alleged rift between the theories of Marx and Engels, first implied by Lukács, was further widened, no longer as an attack upon social democracy, but in defence of it.

In the post-war period, if cold-war commentators were happy to lump together Marx and Engels as the twin architects of a determinist and totalitarian system, the official spokesmen of the Communist Parties were equally insistent upon the seamless unity of the work of the two men, and intensely suspicious of any attempt to distinguish their individual contributions. Alternative interpretations of the Marxist legacy were largely developed by those who felt uncomfortable with either of these poles—a mixed bag of dissident communist theorists, Second International social democrats, radical Christian theologians and existentialist or neo-Hegelian philosophers. Their efforts, either to construct a Marx which challenged the authorized version, or to appropriate him to a pre-existing philosophical tradition, generally took the form of heaping onto Engels all the unwanted components of Soviet Marxism, from which they were so anxious to distance themselves.

The one-sidedness and distortions of the twentieth-century treatment of Engels are really only a measure of the immense and lasting influence that he exerted on the definition of Marxist socialism at the point at which it first began seriously to be adopted by the European socialist movement. This effectively happened, neither in the 1840s, nor in the 1860s, but in the 1880s and the immense burden of work and responsibility that this involved was virtually shouldered by Engels alone. Already in the last years of the First International, the brunt of the battle against Proudhonism and Bakuninism had fallen on Engels, and in the last ten years of his life Marx produced little of immediate public consequence. His answers to the queries of Russian revolutionaries on the relevence of Capital to the character of a future Russian revolution were hesitant and open-ended. They were not sufficiently decisive to be used by Russian social democrats in their struggle against the Narodniks, and were thus left unpublished until the 1920s.3 Similarly, Marx's Critique of the Gotha Programme was an unwanted contribution to the unity negotiations between the Eisenach and Lassallean wings of German social democracy in 1875. Little heed was taken of it even by the professed friends and followers of Marx in the social-democratic leadership, and it was only made public by Engels during the negotiations over a new party programme fifteen years later. The last joint attempt of Marx and Engels directly to challenge the running of the German Social-Democratic Party, the so-called 'drei Storme affair' of 1879-an angry critique of the leadership's toleration of an attempt from within the party to dilute the proletarian character of the spn-ended in an equally bitter blow to their

³ See D. Rjazzanov, 'Briefwechsel xwischen Vera Zasuliç und Marx', Marx-Eagels Archis, Frankfurt/Main 1928, Vol. 1, pp. 309–45.

response, and thereafter it became clear that direct and overt attempts at political intervention would be self-defeating, and that the London exiles would have to accept their honoured but remote role as founding theorists or have their political powerlessness publicly exposed.

But if the late 1870s marked the nadir of Marx's and Engels's personal influence upon the policy of the German party, it also marked the effective point of origin of the Marxism of the Second International. For the world-wide diffusion of Marxism in the guise of a systematic and scientific socialism began neither with the Communist Manifesto, nor with Capital but with the publication of Engels's Anti-Dubring.

The Impact of Anti-Dühring

'Judging by the influence that Anti-Dubring had upon me', wrote Kautsky, 'no other book can have contributed so much to the understanding of Marxism. Marx's Capital is the more powerful work, certainly. But it was only through Anti-Dubring that we learnt to understand Capital and read it properly.4 This was the formative book of the most influential leaders of the Second International—Bebel, Bernstein. Kautsky, Plekhanov, Axelrod and Labriola. Nor was its influence confined to party leaders and theorists. Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, an excerpt from it shorn of all reference to Duhring published in 1882, became the most popular introduction to Marxism apart from the Manifesto. Not only was it widely read in the social-democratic parties of the German-speaking world, but it paved the way to an understanding of Marxism in areas of traditional resistance to Marx's and Engels's positions, especially France. The difference in atmosphere between the late 1870s and the late 1880s was evident in Engels's Ludwig Fenerbach of 1888. Anti-Dubring was in origin a reluctant local intervention into the confused socialism of early German social democracy. It was a year before I could make up my mind to neglect other work and get my teeth into this sour apple', 5 wrote Engels of his polemic which had been published serially in Vorwärts! between 1877 and 1878 (Liebknecht had in fact been urging him to combat Dühring's influence since at least 1874). Fenerbach, however, was written in a quite different spirit. 'The Marxist world outlook has found representatives far beyond the boundaries of German and Europe and in all the literary languages of the world',6 wrote Engels in the preface. Popular conceptions of orthodox Marxism today still date back to Engels's work of systematization and popularization in that crucial decade.

It is this fact which has tended to dominate all subsequent assessments of Engels's achievement. Engels the prophet of dialectical materialism has wholly overshadowed Engels the co-founder and elaborator of historical materialism. Little attention has been paid to his early life and work. Criticism or appreciation of Engels has overwhelmingly focussed

⁴ F. Engels' Brisfivechiel mit K. Kantisky, Vienna 1955, pp. 4, 77.

⁵ F. Engels, Auti-Dubring, Moscow 1969, pp. 9-10.

⁶ F. Engels, Linding Fenerbach and the End of German Classical Philosophy, in K. Mars and F. Engels, Solectal Works, 3 Vols, Moscow 1969, Vol. 3, p. 335

tradition, particularly when filtered through a doisney perspective, have given equal authority to historical materialism and to Engels's generalization of the dialectic, as if they formed part of one seamless web. Conversely, in the eyes of his western critics, Engels has loosely been associated with positivism and evolutionism and with the passivity of Second-International politics, as if the differences between his outlook and that of Kautsky and Plekhanov were simply one of degree, and as if the positions adopted by Marx would have been substantially different from his own. In the light of the subsequent development of Marxism, preoccupation with dialectical materialism or the failures of the Second International has not been surprising. But it has led to a consistent imbalance in the historical treatment of Engels. In the orthodox view, Engels's individuality as a thinker all but disappears. In the conventional western views, his credentials as a Marxist are seriously impugned.

At a simple level of historical fact, the second view is easier to dispose of than the first. It is an elementary failure of historical interpretation not to make any distinction between the constituents of Engels's own outlook, and the way in which he was read by a generation of intellectuals nurtured on Buckle and Comte. Again to quote Kautsky, 'they had started from Hegel, I started from Darwin'.7 It is highly unlikely that Engels conceived his Dialectics of Nature as an all-encompassing genetic theory of development, of which Capital was to form the final socialhistorical part. His concern was rather to redefine materialism in terms which took account of scientific development in the nineteenth century. It was to combat the physiologically-based vulgar materialism of Vogt and Buchner so popular in the liberal-dominated Arbeiterbildingspereine of the 1850s, that Engels had first begun to take an interest in developments in the natural sciences. After the publication of The Origin of Species, he was in no doubt that the historical materialist conception of a mode of production clearly distinguished human history from the Darwinian struggle for existence, and wryly commented upon the fact that the bourgeoisse first projected its social theory (from Hobbes to Malthus) into the world of nature and then, on the basis of Darwin's researches, accepted it back again as an adequate portrayal of human society.

Against the later positivist-evolutionist stress upon natural laws of development, whose effects were conceived in terms of a simple transitive causality and which proceeded unilinearly from the natural through the economic/technological to the political and ideological, Engels—on the basis of historical materialism—was more concerned to demonstrate the effect of human practice on nature through science and production, and (in later years particularly) the relative autonomy of politics and ideology from any simple determination by the economic. It was in relation to the spread of positivist and economic determinist ideas that he wrote to Conrad Schmidt in 1890: 'What these gentlemen all lack is dialectics. They always see only here cause, there effect. That this is a hollow abstraction, that such metaphysical polar opposites exist in the real world only during crises, while the whole vast process goes on

⁷ Cated in G Mayer, op cat, Vol. 2, p. 448

movement being by far the strongest, most primordial, most decisivethat here everything is relative and nothing absolute—this they never begin to see. As far as they are concerned Hegel never existed.*8

Engels, Marx and Hegel

What was problematic in Engels's attempts to theorize the sciences nature and history, was not the few dubiously positivist formulations be found there, but his confident resort to a Hegel whom he and Ma had 'inverted'. Here, however, one should beware of any simp juxtaposition between Marx's and Engels's thought. In the years aft Marx's death, Engels had neither the desire, the confidence nor the tir to develop new positions of his own. His arguments in Fenerbach on t relationship between historical materialism and the natural sciences a upon the dialectical nature of reality, whether natural or historical, h been developing from at least the end of the 1850s and had frequen been raised in his correspondence with Marx.9 It is well known th Marx contributed some of the economic chapters of the Anti-Dubri and that he was acquainted with the work as a whole. It should also mentioned that there are comments in Marx's handwriting on parts the unfinished manuscript of Engels's Dialectics of Nature. Similar although it has been convincingly demonstrated that historical materi ism is not an inversion of Hegel's dialectic, and that such an inversi is not to be found in the theoretical structure of Capital, that should t obscure the fact that this was how both Marx and Engels tried to theor its achievement.10 In this sense, Engels's explanations in Fenerbach do 1 significantly depart from Marx's brief statement in the Preface to Caps. or from Engels's own unfinished review of Marx's Critique of Polit. Economy, published in Das Volk in 1859. Thus, if there was an inadequa in Engels's later explanation of the relationship between Marxism a the Hegelian dialectic, it was an inadequacy fully sanctioned by Marx

But simply to emphasize the congruence of outlook between Marx in Engels is not adequate either. Its effect has been to render invisible considerable independent contribution that Engels made to the development of Marxist theory and to diminish his own individuality a thinker. Engels's own very modest assessments of his contribution his been the principle obstacle here, and later commentators have generabeen content to follow his judgement. In Femerbach, he wrote I can deny that both before and during my forty years' collaboration with Marx I had a certain independent share in laying the foundations of theory, and more particularly in its elaboration. But the greater part of leading basic principles, especially in the realm of economics and hister and above all their final trenchant formulation, belong to Marx. Wh

Engels to Schmidt, 27 October 1890, Solected Works, Vol 3, p 495

See, for instance, Engels to Marx, 14 July 1852, Marx-Engels Works, Vol 29, pp 35 16 On the problem of the possibility of inverting Hegel, see L. Althusser, 'Contradis and Overdetermination' in For Marx, London 1970, for the relationship between Englater theory and Hegel, see Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Engels and the End of Classical Ge. Philosophy', NLR 79, 1973; for other discussions of Engels and 'dialectical materialism L. Colletti, Marxing and Higgs, London 1973, and S. Timpanaro, On Materialism, Lo. 1975.

fields—Marx could very well have done without me. With Aland accomplished I would not have achieved. Marx stood higher, saw further, and took a wider and quicker view than all the rest of us. Marx was a genius; we others were at best talented.'11 It would clearly be pointless to contest Marx's theoretical superiority, nor need there be any doubt that Engels could never have given historical materialism the logical coherence and explanatory breadth with which Marx imbued it. Indeed, on his own, he would probably never have arrived at the theory of historical materialism at all. The division of labour between the two collaborators was established almost from the beginning. In one of his earliest letters to Marx (17 March 1845), concerning their respective plans to write critiques of Frederick List's System of National Economy, Engels wrote that he would deal with the practical consequences of List's theory, 'while I presume in view of . . . your personal inclinations you will go into the premises rather than his conclusions'.12

Most subsequent commentators have left the matter there, assigning to Engels a vaguely auxiliary role in the formation of the theory. They miss the centrality of Engels's contribution, because they look for it in the wrong place. For theoretical ability, even when possessed in as exceptional a degree as in Marx, is a necessary but not sufficient condition of a theoretical revolution: especially in the social domain. For such revolutions to occur, disturbing phenomena are also necessary, which not only point to the inadequacy of the existing theoretical problematic, but are suggestive of the raw components of a new theoretical structure. It was Engels in his writings of 1844 and 1845 who provided these decisive new components—even if in a raw and unsatisfactorily theorized practical state. Before, however, making clear what these components were, it is first necessary to say something of Engels himself, so that the importance and limitations of his contribution become easier to understand.

Family Background

Engels was two years younger than Marx, born in Barmen in 1820, the eldest son of one of the principal manufacturers in the town. ¹³ In the backward and non-industrialized state of Germany in the Restoration period, Barmen and its sister town of Elberfeld, as manufacturing towns dependent on the world market, were exceptional. Travelling journalists and litterateurs in the 1830s and 1840s were apt to refer to the region as the German Manchester, although the German Coventry would have been a more apt description, since its principal trade was ribbon-making and its workers generally worked together with their families in their homes for putting-out merchants who controlled the purchase of raw materials and the sale of finished goods. Elberfeld-Barmen was also exceptional in another respect. Although subject like the rest of the Rhineland to the Napoleonic conquest and the benefits of the Code Napoleon, the population was Calvinist or Lutheran rather than Catholic,

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¹¹ Selected Works, Vol. 3, p. 361

¹² Werks, Vol 27, p. 26.

¹³ On the social history of the nineteenth century Wuppertal, see in particular, W. Kollman, Sexual purisoches der Stadt Barmen von 19 Jahrhondert, Tubingen 1960.

These two features markedly differentiated Engels's family and cultural background from that of Marx. Living in the Francophile zone, and the son of a nominally Protestant Jewish lawyer with liberal enlightenment beliefs, Marx appears to have experienced little early conflict with his father's politics or cultural outlook. At least until the end of the 1830s. the local Trier middle class continued to resent the Prussian occupation. the nostalgia for Napoleon remained strong, and the educated population were receptive to French ideas, both liberal and—in the 1830s—St Simonian. The adolescent Marx appears to have been little moved by the political and cultural stirrings of German nationalism, and to have felt a much deeper affinity with the outlook of the German Anfklarung with its humanist adulation of classical civilization. It is, therefore, not surprising that when after a period in Bonn he arrived as a graduate student in Berlin, he should have felt drawn to a liberal-tinged version of Hegel's notion of the state as the guiding principle of his reflection, rather than the emotive principle of the nation. Until his friend and mentor Bruno Bauer was sacked from Bonn University, he appeared destined for an academic career; and his move to the political left and finally to communism was of a much more gradual and measured kind than that of the young Engels.

Engels's formation was quite different. The pietist protestantism of the Barmen merchants was fiercely opposed to the pagan associations of the Anfklarung, to any rationalist dilution of Biblical interpretation and to the ambiguously protestant philosophy of Hegel. The value placed on education was strictly practical. The Gymnasium at Elberfeld, which Engels attended, enjoyed an excellent reputation, particularly in languages—so important for the Barmen merchant's profession. But schooling stopped at the end of the secondary level and was followed by a commercial apprenticeship in the firm of a business colleague. It was in this way that the young Engels was sent to the Bremen import-export firm of Heinrich Leopold in 1838. Within the closed society of Barmen merchants, creative literature was suspect, Goethe prone to dismissal as 'a godless man' and the theatre regarded as immoral. Although grateful for some of the Napoleonic legal reforms, the prevalent attitude to French ideas was hostile. Family prayers and reading of the Bible, meditation on devotional literature, an ethic of dedication and hard work, and a sectarian theology communicated through the terrifying pulpit oratory of preachers like Krummacher, were the principal components of the merchant family culture of Engels's youth (though lightened somewhat by a love of music, both choral and instrumental). The outlook of the merchant manufacturers was strongly patriarchal, in their attitude to their families, to their workers and to their religion. The world of the merchants was closely tied to the world of the preachers. As social equals, it was normal for merchants' sons to marry priests' daughters, and vice versa. Engels's mother, the daughter of a protestant pastor in Hamm, was typical of this pattern.

There are early signs of Engels's adolescent striving to escape the narrow imaginative horizons of his family and of Wuppertal society. His

a Prency mediacyal romanice — cui schindraßes pach , par ir is important not to over-individualize or over-psychologize Engels's revolt against his father.14 He was not an unloved, cruelly treated or neglected child. On the contrary, as the intended heir to the family business, he appears to have been subject to the constant worried solicitude of his parents. However perennial generational conflict might be, it is only in particular historical circumstances that it acquires social and political significance. In the Wuppertal in the late 1830s and 1840s, a generational divide in religious and social attitudes was not confined to the Engels household. but present, if in a milder degree, among other of his contemporaries. To understand why this was a social rather than an individual phenomenon, it is necessary to realize that the social and religious world of the old merchant families had by the later 1830s begun to disintegrate. The sober Calvinism of the older generation had been deeply ingrained, because it provided a satisfactory ordering of social experience. The merchant élite had made no distinction between the church and municipal government of the town, and the patriarchalism of their religion had been an appropriate articulation of their face-to-face government of the workforce whose cottages clustered round their chapels and their warehouses.

But from the Napoleonic period onwards, Barmen's trade entered a period of prolonged crisis resulting from its dependence on an English-dominated world market. In social terms, the population was threatened by dearth, declining living standards and intensification of work punctuated by frequent spells of unemployment. In religious terms, the result was a break-up of stable church government. Small domestic masters and their apprentices, increasingly engulfed by 'pauperism', were attracted to breakaway revivalist and millenarian sects, while many relapsed into a state of semi-despair exacerbated by a dramatic increase in cheap schnapps consumption. While preaching became more revivalist and emotional, the traditional merchant élite began to withdraw from active church government. It was against this background that the nineteen-year-old Engels made his first pseudonymous attack upon the philistine pietism of the Wuppertal.

The dissidence of the young Engels and his circle in Barmen took the initial form of aesthetic revolt against the narrowness of the merchant world and juvenile attempts to emulate the current literary avant garde. Engels's denunciation of the Wuppertal was not that of an embryo socialist, but that of the aspirant poet and representative of modern literary ideas. He particularly identified himself with the poet Ferdinand Freiligrath, who had come to the Wuppertal to work as a commercial clerk. The image of a double life—a merchant by occupation and a writer by vocation—remained attractive until he managed to escape the family profession in 1845, and it reappeared in various guises in later life.

But by the end of the 1830s, the pre-occupations of literary, political and religious debate were too intertwined to allow meaningful separation.

¹⁴ For an interesting attempt at a psychoanalytical interpretation of the young Engels, ace Steven Marcua, Engels, Manchester and the Working Class, London 1974.

I russian state were an snarply opposed to the various strands of libera ism, rationalism and post-Hegelian biblical criticism. Since the deba was so polarized, to be a writer or poet necessitated a conscious choi between progress and reaction, and there was little doubt which dire tion Engels would follow. Unlike Marx, Engels's first political attitud were strongly shaped by the liberal nationalist literary movement of ti 1830s. His earliest heroes had been drawn from teutonic mythology, at in Bremen the legend of Siegfried remained important to him as a symb of the courageous qualities of young German manhood in strugg against the petty servile Germany of the princes. Soon after he bega work in Bremen he became an enthusiastic disciple of Young Germany. short-lived literary group which had arisen in the wake of the 18: revolution, and modelled its style and stance upon the exiled Jew Heine and Borne. Engels was at first an admirer of Karl Gutzkow, th editor of the Telegraph für Dentschland, who published his Letters from t. Wappertal. But by the end of 1839, Engels's enthusiasm had begun i shift towards Gutzkow's former mentor Borne, whose radical republica denunciations of German princes and aristocrats, combined with h polemic against the Francophobe tendencies of German nationalism appealed to Engels's combative enthusiasm for the 'ideas of the century

The Revolt against Religion

But for Engels at this time, the problem of religious belief was uppe most. Despite his discontent with the outlook of his family, the strengt of his religious upbringing was not easily shaken off. The intensity of h religious longings can be testified by a pietist poem he wrote at the tim of his confirmation. The stages by which he moved away from orthodo Christianity-from a liberal Christianity through Schleiermacher t Strauss—can be traced in detail in his letters from Bremen to his school friends, the Graeber brothers. One thing is clear. He could not simpl move away from belief. He could only abandon one belief when he ha found another. His first criticisms of Wuppertal pietism were writte from the viewpoint of liberal Christianity. But through his reading c Gutzkow's essays, he came across Strauss, and by October 1839, h could write, I am now an enthusiastic Straussian'. Strauss was a bridg to Hegel, and the first impact made upon him by Hegel was akin to religious conversion. In a real or imaginary voyage across the Nortl Sea in July 1840, he stood at the bowsprit of the ship looking out ove the 'distant green surface of the sea, where the foaming crests of th waves spring up in eternal unrest' and reflected: I have had only on impression that could compare with this; when for the first time th divine idea of the last of the philosophers, this most colossal creation c the thought of the nineteenth century, dawned upon me, I experience the same blissful thrill, it was like a breath of fresh sea air blowing dow upon me from the purest sky; the depths of speculation lay before mlike the unfathomable sea from which one cannot turn one's eyes strair ing to see the ground below; in God we live, move and have our being-We become conscious of that when we are on the sea; we feel that Go breathes through all around us and through us ourselves; we feel suc kinship with the whole of nature, the waves beckon to us so intimately the sky stretches so lovingly over the earth, and the sun shines with suc

It was this difference in intensity of emotional need which is one of the features which distinguished Engels's relationship with Hegel from that of Marx. Engels had no academic education in philosophy, he found Hegel in his search for a secure resting-place to replace the awesome contours of the Wuppertal faith which had been so deeply imprinted on his childhood imagination. He never subjected Hegel to the rigorous dissection which Marx undertook in his Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right or his Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy in 1843 and 1844; thus when in later years, in reaction to vulgar materialism and positivism, he resorted once more to Hegel, he tended to reproduce elements of his own pre-Marxist relationship with the German idealist tradition.

Already an enthusiastic Young Hegelian when he left Bremen for his year's military service in Berlin in 1841, he rapidly replaced the pantheist Hegel by the 'secret atheist' Hegel, and soon became one of the most apocalyptic members of 'the free'. Within weeks in Berlin, he was launching polemics against Schelling, who had been summoned to the chair of philosophy there in order to combat the dangerous tendency of Hegelianism. He did not appreciate the incompatibility between Bruno Bauer's left-Hegelian concept of 'self-consciousness', and Feuerbach's 'Man' which, through the method of inversion, effectively annulled the Hegelian dialectic altogether. In all his references to German philosophical radicalism up to The Holy Family, he bracketed Bauer and Feuerbach together as part of a single line of thought. Years later in Ludwig Fenerbach, he wrote of The Essence of Christianity: 'one must himself have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get an idea of it; enthusiasm was general. We all became at once Feuerbachians."16 This was much truer of himself than of other members of the group. For what captured his attention and his enthusiasm, both in The Essence of Christianity and in the later Provisional Theses for the Reform of Philosophy, was not Feuerbach's criticism of Hegel, but his conversion of theology into anthropology, his humanist religion. In all his writings up to his meeting with Marx in Paris in the late summer of 1844, he remained methodologically a Hegelian, all his more ambitious essays taking the form of a dialectical juxtaposition of the development of one-sided principles, whose contradiction was transcended in a higher unity represented by the postulates of communist humanism.

Perhaps another reason why Engels never felt impelled to subject Hegel to a searching critique, was that unlike some of the other Young Hegelians, he never seems to have taken Hegel's theory of the state very seriously. This appeared to him part of Hegel's conservative 'system' rather than his 'revolutionary method', and unlike the rest of the circle Engels had already become a revolutionary republican democrat before he became a Hegelian. Thus in Berlin he still believed he could combine a Hegelian philosophy of history with Börne's republican view of politics. In a comic Young Hegelian mock epic which he wrote with Edgar

16 Selected Works, Vol. 3, p. 344.

¹⁵ Karl Marx-Frederick Engels, Collected Works, London 1975, Vol 2, p 99

... Oshaia fine montagnard
A radical is he, dyed in the wool, and hard.
Day in, day out, he plays upon the guillotine a
Single, solitary tune and that's a cavatina,
The same old devil-song; he bellows the refrain:
Formez yos bataillons! Aux armes, citoyens!

His political position remained jacobin until he met Moses Hess at the Rheinische Zeitung offices at Koln, while preparing to go to England, and was converted to Hess's philosophical communism. It is probably because he had participated so fully in the bohemian anti-Christian excesses of 'the free', and was at one with Edgar Bauer in his frequent denunciations of the politics of a justa milien, that his meeting with Marx in Koln around the same time was so cool.

But Engels's weaknesses were also his strengths. If he did not possess the intellectual persistence and deductive power to be a rigorous original theorist, if his attempts to theorize were more remarkable for their boldness than their finality, his great virtues were his relative openness to new impressions, the persistent radicalism of his temperament, an astonishing quickness of perception and comprehension, a daring intuition and an omnivorous curiosity about his surroundings. He was and remained marked by his merchant upbringing and training. It was to be seen in his methodical dealing with his correspondence, his careful ordering of his affairs, his ability to use every hour of the day, his irritation at the bohemianism of a Liebknecht and his complete antipathy to the generous flourishes of a disorderly aristocrat like Bakunin. He was by all accounts a good businessman, and the acumen with which he represented the family firm in Manchester in the early 1850s greatly helped to ease the tensions caused by the deep rift with his father which had come to its head in 1848.

It was the desire to get outside and beyond this background that made him more personally adventurous than Marx, more willing to flow convention, and at the same time more abrasive to those outside hicircle. It would be difficult to imagine Marx living with a working-clas-Irish woman, exploring the slums of Manchester of his own accordscribbling comic drawings over the manuscript of The German Ideologi roving the French countryside in late 1848 and extolling the charms o the peasant girls, fighting a military campaign in 1849, and back is England riding to hounds, keeping a pet parrot and boasting of his wincellar. 'Spiessburger' was one of Engels's favourite terms of abuse, and there was nothing of the petty bourgeois in Engels's make-up He neve concealed his background and was no diplomatist. Working men werprobably justified in their intermittent complaints of his arrogance,1 though it should not be forgotten that this was accompanied by genuine personal modesty, a candid avowal of his own limitations, and a warm loyalty to old friends. If, as he wrote, he was no genius, he wa certainly a man of exceptional talents. He possessed a fluent and luciprose and wrote with unusual speed. Not only was he a superb exponen-

¹⁷ Collected Works, Vol 2, p 335

¹⁸ See, for instance, S. Born, Erimmung unes Achiendres rigers, Leipzig 1898.

but he was also surely one of the most gitted journalists of the nineteenth century and one of its best historians. It was this unusual combination of attributes that enabled him to make his particular contribution to the formation of historical materialism.

First Visit to England

Engels left for England at the end of November 1842, ostensibly to continue his commercial training at the firm of Ermen and Engels in Manchester, and he remained there for 21 months. Looking back to this first stay in England, forty years later, Engels wrote: 'While I was in Manchester, it was tangibly brought home to me that the economic facts, which have so far played no role or only a contemptible one in the writing of history, are at least in the modern world, a decisive historical force; that they form the basis of the origination of the present-day class antagonisms in the countries where they have become fully developed, thanks to large-scale industry, hence especially in England; are in their turn the basis of the formation of political parties, and of party struggles and thus of all political history.'19 From the evidence of the writing he produced at the time, the process by which he came to these conclusions was by no means as simple and clearcut as his later retrospect implied. For he not only had to use his eyes and ears, to open himself to new impressions, but also to frame questions against the grain of some of the basic presuppositions of the German philosophical communism which he had brought with him to England. The beginnings of a break with these presuppositions did not really appear until the second year of his visit, were not manifest until The Condition of the Working Class in England, which he wrote up in Barmen after his return home between September 1844 and March 1845, and were not completed until the time which he and Marx spent defining their position in opposition to German Ideology in Brussels in 1845 and 1846.

The first signs of his growing preoccupation with the importance of 'economic facts' are to be found from the end of 1843 in an ambitious series of essays on Political Economy, Carlyle's Past and Present and the Condition of England, which were in part published in the Deutsch-Franzosische Jahrbucher and continued in Vorwarts!. A reading of Fourier, but in particular of Carlyle, led him to 'the condition of England': 'the "national wealth" of the English is very great and yet they are the poorest people under the sun'. ²⁰ Or as Carlyle put it: 'in the midst of plethoric plenty, the people perish; with gold walls and full barns, no man feels himself safe or satisfied'. ²¹ A reading of Proudhon's What is Property? and some of the works of Owen stimulated him to connect this condition with the consequences of private property. In late 1843, he wrote of Proudhon: 'The right of private property, the consequences of this institution, competition, immorality, misery, are here developed

¹⁹ F Engels, 'On the History of the Communist League', Selected Works, Vol. 3, p. 178

F Engels, 'Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy', Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 421.
F Engels, 'The Condition of England. Past and Present by Carlyle', Collected Works, Vol. 3,

P 449

However, Engels in his Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy, published in the Deutsch-Frangosische Jahrbücher, went considerably further than Proudhon. He did not simply contrast the miserable economic reality with the statements of political economists, but attempted to show that the contradictions of political economy were necessary results of the contradictions engendered by private property. He was the first of the German philosophical left to shift discussion towards political economy and to highlight the connections between private property, political economy and modern social conditions in the transition to communism. Political economy, he defined as 'a science of enrichment', 'a developed system of licensed fraud' resulting from the expansion of trade and 'born of the merchants' mutual envy and greed'.23 For trade was based on competition engendered by private property, which opposed individual interests to one another, and thus produced the division between land, labour and capital, the confrontation between the labourer and his product in the form of a wage, the conversion of man into a commodity, the invention of machinery and the factory, the dissolution of family andnationality and of all other bonds into a mere cash-nexus, the polarization of society into millionaires and paupers and the universalization of 'the war of all against all'. The 'science of enrichment' which accompanied this process was seen to be trapped in irresolvable antinomies, and its practitioners to be guilty of ever greater hypocrisy and immorality. For the defenders of free trade and liberal economics from Adam Smith onwards, despite their attacks on monopoly and professions of peaceful progress through free trade, refused to question the greatest monopoly of all, private property, productive—under the name of competition of the most bloodthirsty and general war of all against all.

It is known that this essay strongly influenced Marx's own first reflections on political economy in the 1844 manuscripts, and was still regarded by him in 1859 as a brilliant sketch on the criticism of economic categories'.24 Nevertheless, it would be quite wrong to regard the Outlines as evidence of a break with his philosophical communism under the impact of English conditions, or of an anticipation of historical materialism as it was to be conceived in 1845. Not only was the stress placed upon private property and competition rather than mode of production and the struggle between classes, but private property itself was made dependent on 'the unconscious condition of mankind'.25 The stance from which Engels made his critique was 'human', i.e. anthropological, rather than theological; and Carlyle was praised because his book showed 'traces of a human point of view' 26 Engels fully accepted Carlyle's definition of the condition of England, but he ascribed Carlyle's contempt for democracy and ignoring of socialism, not to his class position, but to his 'pantheism', which still placed a supernatural power above

²² F. Engels, 'Progress of Social Reform on the Continent', Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 399.

²³ 'Outlines', Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 422-3.

²⁴ K. Marx, Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy', Selected Works, Vol. 1, p. 504.

^{25 &#}x27;Outlines', Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 433.

[&]quot; 'Condition of England: Carlyle', Collected Works, Vol 3, p. 444

But for Engels, religion, far from being an answer to the immorality and hypocrisy of the present, was in fact the root of the present evil.

The solution was: 'the giving back to man the substance he has lost through religion; not as divine but as human substance, and this whole process of giving back is no more than simply the awakening of self-consciousness... The root of all untruth and lying is the pretension of the human and the natural to be superhuman and supernatural. For that reason we have once and for all declared war on religion and religious ideas.'27 It was for this reason that trade crises could be defined as 'a 'natural law based on the unconsciousness of the participants', that Adam Smith could be described as 'the economic Lather' who put 'protestant hypocrisy' in place of 'catholic candour', and the Malthusian population theory be seen as 'the pinnacle of Christian economics'. It was for similar reasons, evidently reinforced by a reading of Marx's essay on The Jovich Question, that a few months later Engels attempted to develop a theory of the English constitutional monarchy as an expression of 'man's fear of himself'. It was for similar fear of himself'.

Furthermore, if the standpoint of Engels's critique was humanist, its method of critique remained Hegelian. As he wrote, with some consternation, a few days after his arrival in England in November 1842: 'there is one thing that is self-evident in Germany, but which the obstinate Briton cannot be made to understand, namely that the so-called material interests can never operate in history as independent guiding aims, but always consciously or unconsciously serve a principle which controls the threads of historical progress'. Writing a year later on political economy, he remained equally confident that 'once a principle is set in motion it works by its own impetus through all its consequences whether the economists like it or not'. This method of analysing political economy was to 'examine the basic categories, uncover the contradiction introduced by the free trade system and bring out the consequences of both sides of the contradiction'. The second standard of the contradiction'.

The English Paradox

Engels came to England in full agreement with Hess's prophecy that England would be the bearer of a social revolution which would consummate and transcend the religious-philosophical revolution in Germany and the political revolution in France.³³ But from the beginning, he was forced to admit that 'among the parties which are now contending for power, among the whigs and tories, people know nothing of struggles over principles and are concerned only with conflicts of material interests'.³⁴ The problem, therefore, was to discover how in England

²⁷ Ibid p. 463.

[&]quot;Outlines', Collected Works, Vol 3, pp 422, 439

The Condition of England: The English Constitution', Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 491

³⁰ "The Internal Crises", Collected Works, Vol. 2, p. 371.

^{31 &#}x27;Outlines', Collected Works, Vol. 3, p 424.

³² Ibid p 424.

³³ See M. Hess, Die europäische Triarches, Leipzig 1841

^{34 &}quot;The Internal Crises", Collected Works, Vol. 2, p. 371

interests and pure practice. His solution to this problem appeared a yea later in an unfinished series on The Condition of England, written in th first few months of 1844. 'The concern of history from the beginning he wrote, was 'the antithesis of substance and subject, nature and mind necessity and freedom'. World history up to the end of the eighteenticentury had only set these antitheses ever more sharply against on another: 'The Germans, the nation of Christian spiritualism, experienced a philosophical revolution; the French, the nation of classica materialism and hence of politics, had to go through a political revolution.' But, 'The English, a nation that is a mixture of German and French elements, who therefore embody both sides of the antithesis and are for that reason more universal than either of the two factors taker separately, were for that reason drawn into a more universal, a social revolution.'35

The English embodied these antitheses in their sharpest form and it was their inability to resolve them that explained 'the everlasting restlessness of the English': 'the conclusion of all English philosophising is the despair of reason, the confessed mability to solve the contradictions with which one is ultimately faced, and consequently on the one hand a relapse into faith and on the other devotion to pure practice'.36 This explained the religious bigotry of the English middle class combined with its empiricism. But at the same time, 'this sense of contradiction was the source of colonisation, seafaring, industry and the immense practical activity of the English in general'.37 Thus only England had a social history: 'Only in England have individuals as such, without consciously standing for universal principles, furthered national development and brought it near to its conclusion. Only here have the masses acted as masses, for the sake of their interests as individuals; only here have principles been turned into interests before they were able to influence history.'38

We have stressed the philosophical problematic within which Engels attempted to come to terms with England between 1842 and 1844, not to contradict his statement about his growing awareness of the importance of 'economic facts', but to show how great was the intellectual and imaginative effort that had to be made before he could write The Condition of the Working Class in England—a book which is by no means solely an achievement of observant reportage, but which also embodies a profound shift in his political and theoretical position. The distance he had to travel and the extent to which he had to unlearn, not only the pre-suppositions of radical German idealism, but also virtually all the available varieties of socialism of the time, can be highlighted by his changing view of the revolution, the working class and modern industry.

Engels came to England just after the Chartist general strike, confident of Hess's prophecy of imminent social revolution and the realization of communism. Communism, in Hess's scenario, it should be stressed,

³⁵ Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 471

[™] Ibid p. 472.

⁵⁷ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid p. 474

egoism and fragmentation.³⁹ It was not the outcome of a battle between classes, nor was its realization located in the destiny of any particular class. Hess repeatedly rejected Lorenz von Stein's identification of communism with a proletariat spurred on by a greedy and selfish desire for equality derived from the needs of the stomach. 40 Thus Engels acted quite consistently in January 1843 when he turned down the invitation of Bauer, Schapper and Moll in London to join the League of the Just. He refused the communism of the German artisans since, as he later confessed, I still owned, as against their narrow-minded equalitarian communism, a goodly dose of just as narrow-minded philosophical arrogance.41 As he described the creed of the German philosophical communists, among whom he counted himself, later that year, 'a Social revolution, based upon common property, was the only state of mankind agreeing with their abstract principles'. Thus Germans were bound for communism since: 'The Germans are a philosophical nation, and will not, cannot abandon Communism, as soon as it is founded upon sound philosophical principles: chiefly if it is derived as an unavoidable conclusion from their own philosophy. And this is the part we have to perform now.42

Since socialism concerned humanity and not the interests of a particular class, it is not surprising to find that for most of his stay in England, Engels should ascribe much more importance to the Owenites than the Chartists. 'As to the particular doctrines of our party', he wrote in 1843, 'we agree much more with the English socialists than with any other party. Their system like ours, is based upon a philosophical principle'. 43 He was very impressed by how far shead the English were in the practice of Socialism, and his only disagreement with them was that: 'The Socialists are still Englishmen, when they ought to be simply men, of philosophical developments on the Continent they are only acquainted with materialism but not with German philosophy, that is their only real shortcoming.44 His distance from the outlook of the Chartists was further reinforced by their concentration on overcoming solely a form of the state rather than the state itself. For, as he wrote: Democracy 15, 25 I take all forms of government to be, a contradiction in itself, an untruth, nothing but hypocrisy (theology, as we Germans call it), at the bottom. 45 He clearly admired the combativity and spirit of the Chartists from the start and he regarded their victory as inevitable, but his sights were set firmly beyond the transitory triumph of democracy. The Socialists, he wrote in January 1844, 'are the only party in England which has a future, relatively weak though they may be. Democracy, Chartism must soon be victorious, and then the mass of the English workers will have the choice only between starvation and socialism. 46

³⁹ See M. Hess, Philosophie der Tat', T. Zlocisti (ed.), Mous Heir, Sozialistische Aufsatze, Berlin 1921, pp. 62-3

⁴⁰ L v Stein, Der Segralismen und Kommunismen des bentigen Frankreich, Lespzig 1842.

^{41 &#}x27;On the History of the Communist League', Selected Works, Vol. 3, p. 175.

⁴² Progress of Social Reform on the Continent', Collected Works, Vol. 3, p 406.
43 Ibid. p. 407

^{44 &#}x27;Condition of England' Carlyle', Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 467
45 Progress of Social Reform', Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 393

^{46 &#}x27;Condition of England: Carlyle', Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 467.

somewhat disconcerting. On his arrival, he was surprised to discover that, 'when people here speak of Chartists and Radicals, they almost always have in mind the lower strata of society, the mass of proletarians, and it is true that the party's few educated spokesmen are lost among the masses'. He was even more astonished to find that the appeal of socialism was likewise virtually confined to the lower end of society, and that the works of Strauss, Rousseau, Holbach, Byron and Shelley were read' by workers, but virtually unmentionable in middle-class and 'educated' circles. Carlyle helped him to understand why the middle class should be so sunk in 'mammonism' and bigotry, but he could find no better reason why enlightenment should be confined to the lower classes, than that the situation was analogous to what had occurred at the beginnings of Christianity. He

Class and Industry

From around the beginning of 1844, however, a shift in his perceptions is detectable. Philosophical humanism and Hegelian method remained dominant, but the weight attached to different elements within this framework changed. Particularly noticeable is the new and primordial importance attached to the industrial revolution. After a detailed description of changes in industry, Engels stated: "This revolution through which British industry has passed is the foundation of every aspect of modern English life, the driving force behind all social development. Its first consequence was . . . the elevation of self-interest to a position of dominance over man. Self-interest seized the newly created industrial powers and exploited them for its own purposes; these powers which by right belong to mankind became, owing to the influence of private property, the monopoly of a few rich capitalists and the means to the enslavement of the masses. Commerce absorbed industry into itself, and thereby became omnipotent, it became the nexus of mankind. 149

His attention, in other words, had shifted from explaining competition as a consequence of merchants' greed and the political economists' 'science of enrichment' to the real forces which had universalized competition. He had also begun to discern how industrialization had transformed the class system. The most important fact about eighteenth-century England had been the creation of the proletariat, a wholly new class; while in the same process, the middle class had become aristocratic. But this crystallization of England into three distinct classes—landed aristocracy, monied aristocracy and working-class democracy—had in turn undermined the state. In an analysis of the English constitution and the legal system written in March 1844, Engels came to the conclusion-that the famed balance of powers inscribed in the constitution was 'one big lie'. So Contrasting the theory and practice of the Constitution, he wrote: 'on the one hand the trinity of the legislature—on the other the tyranny of the middle class'. Neither Queen, Lords or Commons ruled

^{47 &#}x27;The English View of the Internal Crises', Collected Works, Vol. 2, p. 368

[&]quot;Letters from London', Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 380.

[&]quot;The Condition of England The 18th Century', Collected Works, Vol 3, p. 485

^{50 &#}x27;The Condition of England The English Constitution', Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 498

power of the aristocracy did not derive from its consultational position but from its vast estates. Thus, to the extent that the power both of the anstocracy and the middle class derived from their property and to the extent that 'the influence conferred by property' constituted 'the essence of the middle class... to that extent the middle class does indeed rule'.⁵²

But if the constitution were found to be a mere shell concealing the rule of property, and if other English 'birthrights'-freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, babeas corpus and the jury system—were likewise found to be privileges of the rich and denied to the poor, then what had at first seemed so mysterious to Engels—the unreasoning opposition of the middle class to democracy and socialism—now became much clearer. Socialism remained his guiding aim, and 'democratic equality' remained a 'chimera'. But if the battle against the undemocratic state was in reality not a political battle, but a social battle against the rule of property, then Chartism assumed a quite different significance. For what sort of democracy would a Chartist victory entail? Not that of the French Revolution whose antithesis was the monarchy and feudalism, but the democracy whose antithesis is the middle class and property . . . The middle class and property are dominant; the poor man has no rights, is oppressed and fleeced, the Constitution repudiates him and the law mistreats him; the struggle of democracy against the aristocracy in England is the struggle of the poor against the rich. The democracy towards which England is moving is a social democracy.'53

Around the beginning of September 1844, Engels stayed with Marx in Paris on his way back to Barmen. Continuing his retrospect on his discovery in Manchester of the decisive importance of 'economic facts' as the basis of 'present-day class antagonisms', Engels wrote in 1885: 'Marx had not only arrived at the same view, but had already in the German-French Annals (1844) generalised it to the effect, that speaking generally, it is not the state which conditions and regulates civil society, but civil society which conditions and regulates the state, and consequently, that policy and its history are to be explained from the economic relations and their development, and not vice versa.'54 This statement is only partly true. For on the evidence of Marx's extant writings up to his meeting with Engels, he had not arrived 'at the same view' in at least two important respects. Firstly, while Marx had established the determination of the state by civil society, Engels had established—though not in theoretically generalized form—an equally important proposition, the class character of the state. In his Critical Notes on the Article, 'The King of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian', written a few weeks before Engels's arrival, Marx's basic definition of the state was that: 'The state is based on the contradiction between public and private life, on the contradiction between general interests and private interests."55 In this article,

⁵¹ Ibid

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⁵³ Ibid p. 513.

³⁴ 'On the History of the Communist League', Selected Works, Vol. 3, p. 178.

²⁵ K. Marx, 'Critical Marginal Notes on the Article "The King of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian", Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 198.

scheme was rather the incapacity of political administration in the face of the domination of civil society, from whose contradictory character the illusion of the political realm was itself to be explained. Engels, or the other hand, had defined the English state as an instrument used by the propertied ruling class in its struggle against the working class.⁵⁶

Secondly, Engels's allusion to the type of class struggle engendered by modern industry pertained primarily to himself. Until his unfinished essay on List, written early in 1845, Marx's references to modern industry had been cursory and descriptive. The decisive concept around which the new theory of historical materialism was to crystallize between 1845 and 1847 was that of the mode of production, and the lynchpin of that concept was the emphasis that it placed upon means of production. Theoretically, it would eventually enable Marx and Engels to understand class struggle as the revolt of the forces of production against the relations of production. Politically, it would enable them to declare war on capital, while stressing the progressive tendency of modern industry. The crucial change effected by the industrial revolution had been its transformation of the relationship between the labourer and the means of production. It was this transformation that had produced the unprecedented form assumed by modern class struggle.

Although Engels in 1844 had begun to sense with increasing sureness the revolutionary significance of modern industry through its creation of a new form of class struggle, he was nowhere near to producing the theory of historical materialism. He was simply concerned with the particular path that England appeared to be taking to social revolution, and he clung inconsequentially to a blend of Hegel and Feuerbach in order to explain it. But embodied in the space created by that inconsequentiality were precisely the raw elements which would be the catalyst of the new theory. Marx, on the other hand, in the 1844 Manuscripts, precisely because of his theoretical rigour, remained essentially within an artisanal framework. Following with greater consistency the technique of Feuerbachian inversion, the crucial relationship emphasized was not that between labourer and means of production, but that between the labourer and his product; and his vision was that of man's pauperization, both materially and anthropologically—a world of alienation and private property unmediated by the progressive revolutionary possibilities of the new form of production. Marx's particular impact upon Engels in the summer of 1844 was that of a brilliant humanist theorist, bolder and more original in his application and extension of the logic of inversion to the state and political economy, and clearsighted about the incompatibility between Feuerbach and Hegel.

'The Condition of the Working Class'

The Condition of the Working Class in England represents the final phase of Engels's thinking before he joined Marx in Brussels. The narrowing of

³⁶ The discrepancy between Marx's and Engels's early views on the state is brought out, though not adequately explained, in R. Hunt, The Political Ideas of Marx and Engels, London 1975

of class struggle is itself indicative of a change in his priorities. Like Marx, who later planned to write a book on dialectics, Engels never found time to write his social history of England, of which The Condition of the Working Class was intended to form a part. The Hegelian categorization of English pre-history, which had formed such a prominent part of his preceding essays, is absent from the book, no doubt as a result of his conversations with Marx. But so also, despite his continuing belief that communism stood above the battle of classes, is the pre-occupation with theology and Feuerbach. Engels had contributed some of the most ecstatic passages on Feuerbach in The Holy Family, but already by November 1844 a reading of Stirner's Ero and His Own had convinced him that: 'Feuerbach's "man" is derived from God . . . and therefore his "man" is still possessed of a theological halo of abstraction. The true path for arriving at "man" is the opposite one... We must start out from empiricism and materialism, if our thoughts and in particular our "man" are to be something real. We must deduce the general from the particular and not from itself or out of thin air à la Hegel.'57 Marx evidently disapproved of this programme, in particular its concession to Stirner, and in his next letter Engels deferred to Marx's judgement. 38 Nevertheless, the negative impact of Stirner remained. For the results of Engels's irritation with 'theological chatter' about 'man' and 'theology' and his new concern with 'real, living things, with historical developments and their results' were clearly to be seen in his book.

The starting-point of The Condition of the Working Class was not competition or private property, but the historically specific changes in manufacture from the middle of the eighteenth century. Engels's explanation of this shift was uninformative, 59 but its rationale can be deduced from the general structure of his argument. Competition in itself could only describe a negative process of dissolution, an ever more brutish struggle between individuals, whose only chance of salvation could arise from a renewed consciousness of their humanity, awakened from outside by philosophy. 'Manufacture', on the other hand, could provide the startingpoint of a more complex and contradictory process -a process which contained the potentiality of liberation within itself: 'Manufacture, on a small scale, created the middle class; on a large scale it created the working class, and raised the elect of the middle class to the throne, but only to overthrow them more surely when the time comes, 60 'Manufacture' under free competition could not only explain 'the war of all against all', but also the growth of a labour movement united in an effort to overthrow the competitive system. The English Socialists were no longer praised for their adherence to a 'philosophical principle', but criticized for being 'abstract' and acknowledging 'no historic development'. While bemoaning the demoralisation of the lower classes, they are blind. to the element of progress in this dissolution of the old social order . . . In its present form, Socialism can never become the common creed of the

⁵⁷ Engels to Marx, 19 November 1844, Warks, Vol. 27, p. 12.

⁵⁸ Engels to Marx, 20 January 1845, ibid. p 14.

⁵⁹ F. Engels, "The Condition of the Working Class in England', Collected Works, Vol. 4, p. 125.

Competition only implied the abstract alternative of community, but 'manufacture' was a historic process which by concentrating population into large units of production and large cities had itself created the material possibility of combination between workers. If the centralisation of population stimulates and develops the property-holding class,' it forces the development of the workers yet more rapidly. The workers begin to feel as a class, as a whole; they begin to perceive that, though feeble as individuals they form a power united; their separation from the bourgeoisie, the development of views peculiar to the workers and corresponding to their position in life, is fostered, the consciousness of opposition awakens, and the workers attain social and political importance. The great cities are the birth-places of labour movements; in them the workers first began to reflect upon their own condition, and to struggle against it; in them the opposition between proletariat and bourgeoisie first made itself manifest; from them proceeded the Trade Unions, Chartism and Socialism. The great cities have transformed the disease of the social body which appears in chronic form in the country; into an acute one, and so made manifest its real nature and the means of curing it. '62

In his Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy, Engels had defined competition as an affliction of humanity: 'In this discord of identical interests resulting precisely from this identity is constituted the immorality of mankind's condition hitherto; and this consummation is competition. 63 Now, on the contrary, competition was the nodal point of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working class. The productiveness of each hand raised to the highest pitch by competition among the workers themselves, by division of labour and machinery, generated 'the unemployed reserve army of workers' and deprived 's multitude of workers of bread'. Competition among workers was 'the sharpest weapon against the proletariat in the hands of the bourgeoisie'.64 Moreover, competition constituted not only the practice, but the whole theory of the bourgeousie: 'Supply and demand are the formulas according to which the logic of the English bourgeois judges all human life.' Even the state was reduced to the minimum necessary to 'hold" the . . . indispensable proletariat in check'.65

Conversely, the constant thread in the growth of the working-class movement through Luddism and Trade Unionism to Chartism has been the battle to abolish competition among the workers. The splibetween bourgeois 'political' democrats and working-class 'social democrats after 1842 had revolved around free trade: 'Free competition has caused the workers suffering enough to be hated by them; it apostles, the bourgeoisie, are their declared enemies. The working man

⁶¹ Thid. p. 526.

²² Ibid. p 418.

^{63 &#}x27;Outlines', Collected Works, Vol 3, p. 432.

^{44 &#}x27;Condition of the Working Class', Collected Works, Vol. 4, p. 376.

⁴ Ibid pp 563, 564

tition. The demands hitherto made by him, the Ten Hours DIII, protection of the workers against the capitalist, good wages, a guaranteed position, repeal of the New Poor Law, all of the things which belong to Chartism, quite as essentially as the "Six Points", are directly opposed to free competition and Free Trade. "This question", wrote Engels, 'is precisely the point at which the proletariat separated from the bourgeoisie, Chartism from Radicalism.' Chartism was 'of an essentially social nature, a class movement'. But because Chartism was a social movement, and because socialism represented the only ultimate alternative to competition, a unification of the Chartists and the Socialists in a 'true proletarian Socialism' was soon to be expected, and in that form it must 'play a weighty part in the development of the English people'.

Engels's Contribution to Marxism

How, then, should we characterize Engels's contribution to Marxism? How essential was his presence to the birth of historical materialism? There are no signs that Engels on his own would have produced a new general theory which broke decisively with its various philosophical antecedents. A historical materialist theory could not have been constructed from 'materialism and empiricism' or from a progression from the 'particular' to the 'general', in the way that Engels had proposed in the late autumn of 1844. A new-found enthusiasm for the empirical produced many of the enduring strengths of his book on the working class, but it could not have produced the positions outlined in *The German Ideology* from 1845. England was still treated by him as a special case. It was still possible for him to imagine that France's path to communism would be political, and that of Germany philosophical.

Despite signs that, in the light of his English experience, Engels's expectations of Germany were becoming less naive, the distance between his position at the time of writing The Condition of the Working Class and the position he was to reach at the time of his collaboration on The German Ideology remained profound. It can be measured by comparing two reports he wrote on Germany, the first in December 1844, the second in September 1845. 1. 'Up to the present time our stronghold is the middle class, a fact which will perhaps astonish the English reader, if he does not know that this class is far more disinterested, impartial and intelligent than in England, and for the very simple reason that it is poorer. 67 2. It is true there are among our middle classes a considerable number of Republicans and even Communists . . . who, if a general outbreak occurred now, would be very useful in the movement, but these men are "bourgeois", profit-mongers, manufacturers by profession; and who will guarantee us they will not be demoralised by their. trade, by their social position, which forces them to live on the toil of other people, to grow fat by being the leeches, the "exploiteurs" of the working classes? ... Fortunately we do not count on the middle class at all. *68

[■] Ibid p. 523.

⁶⁷ 'The Rapid Progress of Communium in Germany', Collected Works, Vol. 4, p. 230

[&]quot;The Late Butchery at Leipzig', ibid p. 647.

Marxist theory would, at the very least, have been much slower than it actually was. The Condition of the Working Class in England provided an extraordinarily lucid account of how the development of modern industry had by the same token generated proletarian class struggle and the possibility of ultimate liberation. Engels gave a systematic explanation of the development of a proletarian political economy and of the social character of working-class political demands. It was the process itself rather than the intervention of the philosopher which had awakened workers to a consciousness of their class position, and which he hoped would lead to the emergence of a 'proletarian socialism'. Moreover, his Hegelian formation, for all its limitations, had helped him to avoid two important theoretical obstructions which inhibited advances in the English working-class movement itself. While learning from English socialism the liberating potential of modern industry, through his assumption of a rational kernel to historical development, he could come to avoid their negative evaluation of the antagonism between middle and working class. On the other hand, he could come to share the Chartists' belief in the necessity of an independent working-class politics, without having to base its legitimacy on a labour theory of value derived from a theory of natural right. 69 Thus, distanced by his nationality from some of the more sectarian aspects of the working-class movement, he was able to give a remarkable assessment of the significance of their struggle as a whole.

The importance of this assessment needs to be stressed. For, simply from a comparison of the extant texts, it is clear that a number of basic and enduring Marxist propositions first surface in Engels's rather than Marx's early writings: the shifting of focus from competition to production; the revolutionary novelty of modern industry marked by its crises of overproduction and its constant reproduction of a reserve army of labour, the embryo at least of the argument that the bourgeoiste produces its own gravediggers and that communism represents, not aphilosophical principle, but 'the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things'; the historical delineation of the formation of the proletariat into a class; the differentiation between 'proletarian socialism' and small-master or lower-middle-class radicalism; and the characterization of the state as an instrument of oppression in the hands of the ruling propertied class.

All these were to become basic propositions in the theory of Marx and Engels; but it is, of course, true that they only became 'Marxist' by virtue of the historical materialist logic which was to connect and underpin them. It was Marx who constructed that logic and conceived the historical causality and new concepts, of which these propositions could be the result. As he wrote to Weydemyer in 1852, 'what I did that was new was to prove... that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production'.70

[®] On the subject, see my forthcoming article, 'The limitation of proletarian theory i England before 1850', History Workshop, No. 5, 1978.

history . . . Which revolutionised the science of fiscoly is essentially the work of Marx', but at the same time to dispute his claim to have had 'only a very insignificant share' in its gestation. The For what Engels had provided were the raw components which dramatized the inadequacies of the previous theory and formed a large part of the nucleus of the propositions to which the new theory was addressed. Engels's disclaimer becomes more understandable if it is realized that some of the most important of these propositions were not in any sense original to Engels himself. Take, for instance, the definition of the modern state, set out in The German Ideology: 'To this modern private property corresponds the modern state, which, purchased gradually by the owners of property by means of taxation, has fallen entirely into their hands through the national debt, and its existence has become wholly dependent on the commercial credit which the owners of property, the bourgeois extend to it, as reflected in the rise and fall of government securities on the stock exchange. 772 Such statements, or less sophisticated variants of them, had been commonplaces of the unstamped press and Chartist politics. So had much of the case against Malthus, the condemnation of overproduction as a result of concentration upon the world market and the notion of the reserve army of labour. The importance of Engels's contribution derived less from his moments of theoretical originality than from his ability to transmit elements of thinking and practice developed within the workingclass movement itself in a form in which it could become an intrinsic part of the architecture of the new theory.

Theory and Practice

The importance of this moment in the beginnings of Marxism is generally ignored. In the standard account, first formulated by Kautsky and subsequently given enormous prestige through its partial adoption by Lenin in What is to be Done, the process of the connection between socialism and the labour movement is wholly one-way. Socialist theory is developed outside the working class by bourgeois intellectuals, then communicated to the most far-seeing of the working class and finally filters down to the working-class movement. The working class plays a wholly passive role in the process, a picture resembling Marx's view of 1843 in which the proletariat lends its force of arms to the philosopher and is given in return a consciousness of what it is and what its struggle means. It is in accordance with this position to view Marxism's own theoretical break as the generis—a motor fuelled solely by theoretical introspection. It is only after the theory has been formed, that a juncture is made with the proletarian movement, which then propagates the new ideas.

Against this interpretation, it should be stressed that while the concepts, and structure of the new theory are certainly irreducible to experience and can only be the result of theoretical work, the changing questions which provoked the new theory had their source by definition outside the pre-existing theoretical discourse. Both in Engels's and in Marx's case, the form of their questioning changed, as their knowledge and

⁷¹ Selected Works, Vol. 3, p. 179.

⁷² K. Marx and F. Engels, 'The German Ideology', Collected Works, Vol. 5, p. 90.

Marx attended meetings of Parisian artisans in 1844 and that this experience made an evident impression on his work.⁷³ But the effect was even more striking in Engels's case. For Paris was not as strategic a place as Manchester to assimilate the connections between modern industry and the modern labour movement.

What distinguished Engels from many of his contemporaries was a deep-rooted discontent with his own background and milieu. It made him willing not merely to learn about, but also from workers, not merely to read the available sources but also to make personal contact, and consider himself part of their movement. How he spent his time in Manchester, is stated by Engels in the Preface to his book: I forsook the company and the dinner parties, the port wine and the champagne of the middle classes, and devoted my leisure hours almost exclusively to the intercourse with plain working men; I am both glad and proud of having done so.74 It is known that, in Manchester, he became acquainted with the Burns sisters; that he argued with John Watts of the Owenites; that he attended the Halls of Science, witnessed Chartist interventions against the Anti-Com Law League, met James Leach, a factory workerprominent in the National Charter Association, and in the autumn of 1843 introduced himself to Harney at the Northern Star offices at Leeds. The effect of this experience is clear from his book, but part of what he learnt, he tells us explicitly in the Preface: 'Having ... ample opportunity to watch the middle classes, your opponents, I soon came to the conclusion that you are right, perfectly right in expecting no support whatever from them. 775

Of course, as we have tried to show, there was no simple capitulation of theory in the face of experience between 1842 and 1845, either on Marx's or on Engels's part. The process was necessarily much more complex, since a theory, however ultimately inappropriate, is more likely to be stretched and forced to take account of new phenomena than to be abandoned—at least, until the possibility or beginnings of another can be discerned. It was Marx who accomplished this theoretical transformation. But it was Engels who had preceded him, in providing so many of the elements of what was to be the object of that theory, though only in a practical state and posed unsatisfactorily within an inappropriate philosophical problematic. If Engels was a less consistent thinker than Marx, that was a crucial virtue in the formative period that led up to the break-through to historical materialism. For what it ensured was that the juncture between a materialist theory of history and the practical assumptions of working-class struggle—an event which in the orthodox account took place in 1847 when Marx and Engels joined the Communist League—was already there as part of the new theory at its moment of formation in Brussels in 1845.

⁷³ For a good account of Mara's changing attitude to the working class in this period, se M Lowy, La Thisru de la Révelution cher la pume Marx. Paris 1970

⁷⁴ Collected Works, Vol 4, p 297

⁷⁵ Ibid p 298.



ATIONALISM VERSUS MARXISM

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lenne:Balibar Posttivism and Irrational Though

dan Foster Carter Time Modes of Brodligtion Debate

an Carlo Pajetta: Conflicting the Horn of Africa

d Coombs Labour and Monopoly Capital

January-February 1978

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Although the replacement of feudal by capitalist societies has always involved a weakening of the power of established religions and churches, the rise of the bourgeoisie has also invariably been accompanied by new forms of religious movement. Throughout its history, the bourgeois class has generated transcendental and irrationalist ideologies. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the late capitalist societies of today are characterized by a wider expansion and proliferation of irrationalist modes of thought than ever before; and, naturally, some of these have their impact also upon Marxism. In the last issue, we printed an article on one irrationalist thinker-Heidegger-who has influenced some Marxists. Here, we publish a bracing study of a more general kind by Étienne Balibar, on the history of struggle by Marxism against irrationalism. Balibar vigorously challenges the conventional notion that Marxists can pursue this fight under the banner of an Enlightenment type of rationalism—which, he contends, has always been inextricably linked to the juridical ideologies of capital. By contrast, he singles out contemporary positivism as the real and principal enemy of historical materialism—the main ideological armament of the bourgeoisie today, which Marxists forget at their peril, and of which the various exponents of irrationalism, whether vulgar or modish, are merely the disreputable obverse.

NLB has just brought together for the first time in a single volume the great aesthetic debates of the thirties between Adorno, Benjamin, Bloch, Brecht and Lukács. Their interlocking and overlapping dialogues range over tealism and modernism; artistic values and politics; painting, music, cinema and literature. It is this volume, 'Aesthetics and Politics', that Terry Eagleton takes as his point of departure for a stimulating and original essay. Surveying the widespread influence of semiotic theory at present, Eagleton

onvergences and antinomies of the classical German debates, he proposes

onvergences and antinomies of the classical German debates, he proposes conceptual grid within which the theoretical positions of each of the articipants may be fixed, and points out that the category of 'materialist calism' remains unrepresented to this day.

his issue also contains a wide-ranging conspectus by Aidan Foster-Carter f the multiple discussions among economists, anthropologists, ustorians and development theorists over differential modes of production nd their articulation. For all its contrast of focus and approach, Fosterlarter's article is concerned with the same fundamental problems as Robert Brenner's in NLR 104: how capitalist development is to be explained istorically, and what factors encourage or prevent it in the 'third world' oday. Examining in turn the theoretical undertakings of such disparate hinkers as Frank and Kay, Althusser and Balibar, Rey and Meillassoux, Varren and Banaji, Amin and Wallerstein, Post and Alavi, Foster-Carter resses the case for a theoretical synthesis in the field of Marxist studies of levelopment. His own plea is for a dual approach combining Wallerstein's iotion of a world system with the concept of specific relations of exploitation; an approach that rejects any unilateral economism and gives lue weight to each separate instance within bold social and global otalities.

Labour and Monopoly Capital', which has already proved, less than four rears after publication, to be one of the most influential works of Marxist political economy written since World War Two. Its originality and passion have evoked an immediate response, in fields ranging from the study of apitalist technology or changing work relations in the modern factory via educational theory to analysis of sex or race discrimination in employment. Coombs gives a careful account of Braverman's contribution, bringing out its weaknesses and imbalances as well as its strengths. In particular, he irgues that—despite its contrast with Baran and Sweezy's 'Monopoly Capital' in the central emphasis accorded to the industrial working class in the strüggle against capitalism—'Labour and Monopoly Capital' nevertheless suffers from too close a continuity, in its economic framework and general theoretical co-ordinates, with Baran and Sweezy. NLR 107 is completed by two short background texts on the situation in Ethiopia.

It is with very great regret that we inform readers of the tragically early death of Bill Warren, in January 1978. A frequent and original contributor to the Review, his work stimulated Marxist discussion in many fields.

Irrationalism and Marxism

Iow should the philosophies of crisis be combated? For some time, Communists ave had to pay rather more systematic attention to a number of ideological hemes whose contemporary weight cannot be put down to chance. In the conomic field, the phenomenon involves such notions as 'the limits of growth', zero growth', and the 'risks' and 'harmful effects' (for 'man' and 'nature') of itensive industrialization. At the social level, it involves a renewal of anarchist reguments directed against 'institutions' and 'power', and proclaiming the ecessity of immediate 'abolition' of the Family, the School, Medicine and the ourts. On the philosophical plane, it involves yet another challenge to 'the value f science' as a mode of knowledge and source of social progress—be it in favour f religious (Ilich) or mystic-naturalist ('Princeton Gnosticism') themes, or be it in ivour of nihilist and irrationalist ones (Deleuze-Guattari). It need hardly be ressed that, for us, the problem is not whether these themes have to be combated: a practical and ideological level, but how, from what point of view, the struggle nould be waged. It is a philosophical question. It is a political question.

IT REMIDES OF POINTS CAN BE HIRDERS OBCC. FLOWEVER GIVERSE THEY HIRY BE, all these ideological themes shore up the attempts of the big bourgeoisie to 'solve' the crisis in its own way and to its own advantage. They do this by presenting the crisis as inevitable, by proclaiming the need for austerity, and by substituting for the real social causes such imaginary ones as Technology and Science abstractions held to blame for all manner of evils. Furthermore, of course, a considerable part of this offensive is preconcerted and articulated to immediate objectives (whose possible effects on manual and intellectual workers have to be concealed): namely, the 'restructuring' of capitalist production and, perhaps, the beginning of a displacement of the centres of capital accumulation towards other, formerly 'underdeveloped' regions of the world that appear, by virtue of their cheap labour force and 'strong' régimes, as the new paradise of free enterprise. Hence the accompanying curtulment or selective limitation of expenditure on education and scientific and technological research. Folk wisdom puts it very well: He who wishes to drown his dog, first makes it out to be rabid.

To an important degree, these ideological themes are simply a mechanical inversion of those which used to be put forward in the previous period, often by the very same professional ideologues. Thus, the myth of 'growth' as the ideal of modern times becomes that of 'zero growth'; the myth of the power and intrinsic value of science and technology passes into that of their impotence and harmfulness. The very same notions—'industrial civilization', 'consumer society', 'automation', etc.—are now given a minus sign instead of a plus.

Finally, beside the 'right-wing' variant of these ideological themes, a 'left' version can also be advanced, through which part of the opposition to the present régime is 'recuperated' or deflected, at least at this level. The objective result is to weaken the workers' struggles and multiply the obstacles to the fighting muty of workers, other employees, peasants and intellectuals. If responsibility for the danger posed by atomic power-stations lies with nuclear physics, then it is the latter that must be denounced, rather than the complete subordination of industrial and energy policy to a few domestic or American monopolies. If any medicine other than the 'barefoot' kind is the social or 'psycho-social' 'cause' of illness, then medicine itself must be attacked, rather than discriminatory treatment, the wretched inadequacy of hospitals and dispensaries, or the all-powerful drug trusts. If growth, extended education, scientific research and technical progress are inherently contradictory and

¹ The new conjuncture is very different from that of the fifties and sixties, when 'miraculous rates of profit sustained a continuous process of expansion of capital accumulation is France. Today, the big bourgeoisie is caught in a formidable contradiction. On the on-hand, its political power depends on the maintenance of its (begennone and uneven) alliano with the 'middle layers' of society, including intellectual wage-earners and eneve a fraction of the working class. On the other hand, it is becoming absolutely essential to suppress anything that, from the point of view of capital, contributes to the massive feath fraction of 'privileges' of these same layers, in other words, it is becoming essential to speed up the prelaterativistics, beginning with an attack on their swerty (both Social Security and joi security) and their qualification (of which the general cultural level forms an integral part.' This contradiction is becoming visible today and is, in the long term, of an explosive character.

society, for socialism, is just a pipe-dream.

In the light of these facts and of the experiences of the past, Communist have set themselves the urgent task of uncompromising struggle agains such ideological themes. They see this as an integral part of their figh against austerity policies and big capital's attempts to exploit the crisis, as well as for the development of the popular movement. This communis response often attaches considerable importance to the idea of irrationalism arguing that this is being fostered in a more or less deliberate manner, or that at any rate the ruling (bourgeois) ideology is tending to slide toward: irrationalism. The following schema might, therefore, be advanced whereas, throughout the historical period of its economic rise and political dominance, the bourgeoisie above all developed rationalis. ideology and philosophies, exalting the advance of knowledge or advance through knowledge, this tendency is inverted in the epoch of its crisis and decay. Whether it likes it or not, the bourgeoisie now falls prey to irrationalism. By contrast, the working class, which represents the fature of human society, appears henceforth as the bearer and defender of philosophical rationalism, enabling it to make progress and enter a new field of action. Thus, today, the working class situates itself within a tradition that has been shown to be correct by past struggles (notably those in the epoch of fascism; in France, for example, Georges Politzer, Maurice Thorez and others already combated fascism under the banner of Descures).

Without doubt, then, this question is of both theoretical and practical importance. But we also know that it is crucial gradually to refine our ideas and theses: for, with regard to ideological struggle just as on any other political terrain, no position is ever *spontaneously* one hundred per cent correct and effective. It is the combination of concrete analysis of the present with the theoretical lessons of Marxism that will allow us to refine our positions, through discussion and comparison of experiences. In this spirit, I offer the following reflections on the question of rationalism and irrationalism.

What is Irrationalism?

In a certain sense, irrationalism evades by internal necessity any unified, systematic definition. Its significance and influence are not based on a coherent system, capable of providing ideological and institutional armour to the whole of society. To speak of irrationalism is to designate an ensemble of diverse tendencies that react against, or present themselves as 'critiques' of, scientific, political, economic Reason or rationality, drawing upon an ideological past and thereby testifying to its persistence. It is of the highest importance, however, not to confuse the essentially modern phenomenon of irrationalism with the ideologies that preceded rationalism—especially with the dominant ideology of pre-capitalist feudal societies: religion. What must be understood is the relationship between contemporary irrationalism and the profoundly altered forms of myth and religion that 'survive' today. The relationship is very unequal and calls in turn for distinctions of great practical consequence.

means insignificant, form of irrationalism: a more or less homogeneous mixture of superstitions, pseudo-scientific and para-scientific beliefs (whose prophets range from Albert Ducrocq to Uri Geller), nature-worship, and religion (Lourdes I). This is a very important phenomenon. But it is not, at bottom, qualitatively new, however great and variable the publicity accorded it by the ideological policies of the bourgeois press and radio. On the contrary, the phenomenon has a long ancestry.

What are its causes? It is not enough to invoke the age-old ignorance of the masses, for that is in no sense a natural or absolute condition. Ultimately, we must rather recall the contradictions and limits that still affect the education given to the masses in a class society like our own. The bedrock of vulgar irrationalism, underlying all the operations of ideological mystification treated here, is at once the residue and the by-product of bourgeois education-above all, therefore, of 'secular' primary-school education itself. We are thus led back whether we like it or not to the historical contradictions of the latter. For although it involves an unprecedented extension of popular instruction, such primary schooling does not overcome inequality of knowledge: in the last analysis, it even tends to reproduce and strengthen it, by isolating science from the practice of the masses as a barely glimpsed 'mystery'. The result is a dual ideological exploitation of the popular masses and of scientists and other intellectuals. At the same time, and despite appearances, this 'secular' schooling represents a historical compromise with religious ideology, whereby the struggle between the two is not ended but confined within certain limits. ("The school belongs to the teacher, the church to the priest', "To each his own truth'). In essence, the bourgeois idea of secularity (which, as we shall see, is specifically positivist in character) signifies that, once the 'excesses' of militant rationalism among teachers have been reabsorbed and repressed, the school does not set itself the task of overthy criticizing religion; or, to be more precise, it does not set itself the task of explaining the content, social foundations and (contradictory) historical function of religion. Thus, ignorance of what religion really is ultimately serves religion itself-its 'superstitious' revivals and the various surrogates that mimic science and shroud it in mysticism. Lack of knowledge opens the way to the monstrous phenomenon of para-scientific religiosity.

Seemingly opposed to this mass irrationalism is a sophisticated and relatively esoteric form, peculiar to professional philosophers (including the theoreticians of diverse 'human sciences' and literary disciplines). The masses are to a varying degree susceptible to irrationalism, which nevertheless inhabits only the gaps in their common sense. But some philosophers live (in every sense of the term) on and for irrationalism Moreover, the origins of philosophical irrationalism go back a long way it is not often remembered that 'Enlightenment philosophy' itself, that bourgeois rationalism of the eighteenth century, already had its counterpoint in a current of mysticism, pietism, 'Mesmerism' and 'illuminism that was to run into the vast nineteenth-century constellation o 'philosophies of nature' (Schelling), 'romantic philosophy' (Novalis) Christian existentialism (starting with Kierkegaard), and so on-Alongside this religious phenomenon was an atheist and anarchis irrationalist current, initiated by Stirner and Nietzsche. Both the one and

of Reason, Concept and 'System' (the terrible Hegelian system!), trational theology or to that 'new theology' called science—and both leadirectly, through Bergson and Heidegger, to the contemporary philosophies of Desire, Life, metaphysical Revolt, Violence, 'transgression and so on (from Reich, Marcuse and Bataille to Deleuze, Edgar Morin (al.). Part of their inspiration is anti-scientific, another part para-scientific (as is expressed by their exploitation of the contradictions of biology psychoanalysis and ethnology). An important symptom is the fact that whereas mass irrationalism tends to be an overt force of political conservatism, or even reaction, the irrationalism of the philosophers is, in the particular conditions of present-day France (those of 'before' and 'after' Ma 68), rather of an anarchist type: on the order of the day is not th straightforward negation of the struggle of exploited classes, but it transcendence or drowning in the imaginary conflicts of Power and Sex

But that is not all. Despite the possibility of overlap, it seems necessary in practice to distinguish carefully between this professional philosophy and what should really be termed the irrationalism of scientists. We are talking now of a quite new phenomenon, which requires our undivided attention. For it concerns the specific current forms of the 'spontaneous thilosophy of scientists: that is to say, the ways in which the ruling ideology exercises its hold over scientific workers when they are, on the whole feeling more and more acutely the contradictions of society. The origina and specific feature is not so much the thematic content of the irrationalism, according to which some scientists declare that they 'nc longer believe in science', either as an institution (science is a mere instrument of power, of the existing powers) or as a mode of knowledge (science is an 'ideology', or even Ideology par excellence). As Lenin said in another period, such notions are 'old hat' in philosophy. No, what is new is, on the one hand, the fact that they most often present themselves in the terminology of Marxism, 'tinkering around' with and turning inside out its major theses; and, on the other hand, that they deeply penetrate the scientific milien through their numerous variants and are sometimes concretized in practices—veritable 'ideological acts' which, though frequently aborted, continually re-emerge in quest of favourable conditions: in individual challenges to the administrative structures of research and education, in the 'ecological struggle', and in 'marginal' political actions. What are the historical bases of this tendency? What significance can it assume for Communists? What unformulated 'question' thereby makes itself heard, requiring a fitting answer from the Marxists? I shall return to these points after recalling certain struggles fought by the last generation.

Past Struggles against Irrationalism

As a matter of fact, this is not the first time we have faced a conjuncture in which the different forms of irrationalism have exhibited a tendency to fusion. In the thirties and forties, Marxism, and especially Communist philosophers, waged a systematic struggle against irrationalism—and they did so in the name of rationalism. In France, Politzer victoriously carried out this task with the support of eminent scientists like Paul Langevin, Marcel Prenant and Henri Wallon. At the same time, Lukács

then a matter of combating fascism, which the bourgeoisie had made into its bulwark against proletarian revolution, its offensive weapon against the European workers, in order to surmount the gravest crisis yet known by the capitalist system. Without going over the entire history of this struggle, we can draw out some important gains, as well as a number of problems raised by the experience.

Politzer and Lukács demonstrated that the official ideology of Nazism (that of blood and race, of Labensrann) was not an isolated phenomenon or an artificial invention. It had long been prepared by the current of philosophical irrationalism-by Bergson in France, by Nietzsche and Heidegger in Germany—and gradually transmitted to intellectual milieux by the 'inversion' of the values of scientific progress and bourgeois political democracy, which had been intimately connected in classical rationalism. They showed further that the spread of irrationalism corresponded to a period of open crisis, in which the historical limitations and barbaric character of capitalism became clear to vast masses of men and women under the impact of imperialist wars and the Soviet revolution. Bourgeois democracy then appeared for what it was: a form of dictatorship of a possessing class, of 'money', that can at any moment topple into violence if the circumstances so dictate. Politzer and Lukács demonstrated that irrationalism was fundamentally a means of struggle against the revolutionary ideology, and thus against Marxist philosophy, dialectical materialism.

In this respect, a revealing game of general post takes place: whereas irrationalism of the fascist type brands 'Descartes' (or Kant) as the forerunners and theoretical inspirers of 'materialism' and Marxism, the rationalist philosophers of the bourgeois University (Benda, Koyré et al.) denounce in Marxism a form of irrationalism, on a par with Nazism (sic), and oppose to it the very same Plato, Descartes and Kant. The bourgeoisie thus fights on two fronts—as do the Marxists. In a sense, the battle of ideas is waged over the question: for or against Descartes? Who is the real 'Descartes', the real Kant: a progressive or a reactionary, a materialist or an idealist?

Strange stakes—the importance of which cannot be grasped unless it is seen that, in the Marxist camp and in the conditions of the epoch, this struggle has remained of a fundamentally defenses character. To be sure, it made a weighty contribution to the mity around the working class of the popular forces (including intellectual workers) who struggled against fascism, then joined the Resistance, and later fought against the 'Cold War' and for peace. But did it achieve a lasting shift in the ideological front and advance the overall struggle of Marxism against bourgeois ideology? That is another question. By laying claim to the heritage of philosophical rationalism, and by forging an 'alliance' with intellectuals and scientists on that basis, Marxism blocked one of the forms of bourgeois ideology; but, against that, it was led to present (and think of) itself either as a form of 'rationalism', or as the 'modern' continuation of rationalism. or as a philosophy of which rationalism is a 'constituent part'.

They thus pave the way for the theory of 'totalitarianism', which formed the ideologics anthem of the post-war 'Free World'

INOW LOURY WE CALLEDO OF CLICOL ALME LEDGES . ADDOG TELLE J. LETE. ET, A. the social plane as well as that of 'ideas'. Let us simply jot down these lessons at random: fascism is an exceptional, but not fortuitous, politico ideological form within the history of imperialism; the defence of Marxism as a type of rationalism was pregnant with internal contra dictions—for, besides Politzer and Lukács, it mobilized in 'the defence of reason' an ultra-revisionist tendency (the Frankfurt School of Horkheimer and Adorno) which was capable of turning into irrationalism (Marcuse); this mode of defence coincided in time with a theoretica stagnation and mechanicist deformation of Marxism (Stalin); and finally. through the very forms of its reliance on scientific knowledge, Marxism found itself being dragged into grave errors, or at least into an inability to forestall these and distinguish clearly their roots—witness the 'condemnation' of psychoanalysis as 'an ideology without a future' and 'a regression towards the unconscious', at a level well short of scientific rationality, or witness the influence of Lysenko's doctrines, resting on the equation: Mendelian genetics = Weissmann's vitalist mysticism = racism.3

What was thus, to a considerable extent, masked was the fact that the irrationalism and obscurantism of Nazism constituted an anti-scientific philosophy only in 'theory', that is, on the surface: in no sense did it aim in practice to limit or block Germany's scientific and technological development in the service of large-scale industry and militarism—quite the contrary! Nor, above all, did it seek to curb the 'rationality' and 'rationalization' of exploitation, of 'scientific' political propaganda and the concentration camp 'system'. It was, then, this contradictory aspect of irrationalism that threatened to pass unnoticed.

In order to see things more clearly today, it is therefore necessary to pose a twofold question: 1. What is the historical significance of philosophical rationalism? 2. What connection is there, in our epoch, between an economic and social *crisis* of capitalism, situated in the general context of imperialist crisis, and the contradictions of the ruling ideology?

What is Rationalism?

Our present task is not to recapitulate the whole history of philosophical rationalism: it may well be that its origins are as old as philosophy itself, stretching right back to Antiquity (Democritus, Aristotle). We are concerned rather with the structure of rationalism as the dominant philosophy of the modern epoch, and with the direction of its tendency of development. We shall have to examine the dialectical relationship that arises, as a function of given historical conditions, between the two determining tendencies of philosophy: materialism and idealism. Like any philosophy, rationalism is a compromise formation—a product of the straggle between materialism and idealism under the continuing

On this docume, and persistently repressed point, see Dominique Lecourt, Proletarian Science? The Case of Lyundho, NLB 1977.

⁴ See Brecht's remarkable 1937 text, 'Rede uber die Widerstandskraft der Vernunft' (Speech on Reason's Capacity to Resist), in Geneumelte Werks, Vol. 20, Frankfurt 1967.

or rather in its development and process of variation, a specific form of materialist tendency enters as a constituent element. Conversely, during a whole period, this materialism exists in no other form than that of a component of rationalism, on the 'terrain' of the rationalism that it itself helps to create. (There is not over here a timeless Materialism existing as a hidden presence, and over there its 'expression' in rationalist form, within the 'limits' of rationalism.)

What then is the specific form, corresponding to the historical conditions of the ascendant bourgeois class and the development of capitalism at the expense of serf modes of production and their feudal-despotic superstructure? It is the materialism of anti-religious struggle: of the critique of religion and theology, and thus—on the philosophical plane of spsrstualism. As an anti-religious tendency, this materialism subtends the ensemble of uneven forms of classical 'metaphysical' or 'empiricist' rationalism. Rationalism is materialist in so far as it is opposed to religion and spiritualism (in unequal degrees). But this feature is not by itself sufficient. The characteristic element of rationalism is struggle against religion by and for the science of nature: by the latter, because rationalism borrows from it, in order to 'refute' religion, those concepts and 'methods' whose philosophical generalization allows the critique of theology, miracles, revelation, providence, and so forth; for it, because, in exchange, this critique continually seeks to shatter (at least some of) the ideological fetters on the progress and productive application of the science of nature.

Already at this level we can see that the force of the maternalist component must vary with the historical form of rationalism—not only with the development of scientific knowledge and the strength of the bond established between science and philosophy, but also with the weight of a particular philosophy in the struggle unfolding on its own terrain. Certain variants are altogether paradoxical. Thus, rationalism may take on the shape of a 'rational theology'; while, at the same time, the struggle against theology may assume another compromise form, setting against Faith not Reason, but its 'opposite': Experience, Feeling and Life. This is the first sign of that symmetrical complet that will be constituted by rationalism and irrationalism—the function of which will change according to the conjuncture.

But this characteristic is still not sufficient to account for the variants and contradictions of rationalism, or for the warenames of its relationship with materialism. In order to understand this relation, we must grasp that recourse to the science of nature against religion is by no means rooted it a simple confrontation of the two. It is rationalism itself that imagines and declares that there is an immediate incompatibility between science and religion, capable of setting the one against the other; and that the outward form of this is an incompatibility between natural light and revelation, between reason and myth (or the mystical), understanding and

⁸ See the article by Pierre Macherey: 'L'histoire de la philosophie considerée comme us lutte de tendance', *La Pousie* No 185, February 1976; and my talk at the CERM series of dialectics: *Sur la contradiction* (forthcoming).

and error (or illusion). In reality, however, this relation is *produced* unde the impact of another 'cause' of the rationalist position: that is to say, by mediation of a *practical*, and even 'political' order.

The deepest cause of rationalism's struggle against spiritualism was, it fact, the practical opposition between the religious conception of the world and bourgeois law. In and through the elaboration of juridical ideology which provided it with a theoretical guarantee and a day-to-day practice bourgeois law was able to evolve according to the historical process required by the development of the relations of production and the national State. Historical analysis of rationalism (and of the very category of Reason or rationality) demonstrates that the struggle agains religion for and by the science of nature had as an internal condition the struggle against religion for and by the development of law and bourgeois juridical ideology.

A basic conclusion follows from the above: the element of materialism that enters the constitution of rationalism is not only affected from within by the uneven degrees of struggle and compromise between religion and science of nature. It is not enough to 'pull it clear' of this limitation for it to appear 'in person'. For it is affected above all by the fact that its coming into play depends upon bourgeois ideology, and thus by the fact that the struggle against religious idealism takes place under the internal domination of another idealism: the juridical idealism of natural law and the free individual subject.

We can now understand that paradoxical circumstance with which we are still bound up today: rationalism is all the more 'consistent' in antireligious struggle, all the 'purer' and more clearly demarcated from spiritualism and its own congenital alter ago irrationalism, the greater its consistency as a philosophical realization of bourgeois juridical idealism. Scientific 'rationality' represent juridical 'rationality'. Thus, its strong and typical form is the elaboration of the category of Reason in accordance with a conception of society as Nature, as the realization of human nature (and not of the designs and laws of divine providence), and as a mechanical and harmonious system of 'natural' relations between reasonable individuals.⁷

Only if we go back to this internal structure of philosophical rationalism can we clearly see the principle and the forms that characterize the dominant philosophical ideology when capitalism has definitively prevailed over feudalism, and when, at the same time, the proletarian class struggle is developing and giving rise to a radically new form of materialism (that dialectical materialism which is invested in the

On this and other points, see the remarkable 1887 article by Engels and Kautsky, 'Junstic Socialism', in Marx and Engels, On Religion, Moscow 1975, pp. 235-8

⁷ The bourgeois philosophical myth of Reason—that revolutionary goddess—continues to express the mity of a universal human faculty of Nature. It thus has the sovereign power to delimit the field of error and the field of truth, and to become incarnate in the advance of the sciences. See the converging analyses of Louis Althusser: Philosophia si philosophia spontant observation, Paris 1974; 'Elements of Self-Criticism', and 'Is it simple to be a Marxist in Philosophy? (the text of his Amiens thesis) in Essays in Sulf-Criticism, London 1976

all, those of contemporary positivism and neo-positivism.8 Positivism is still a form of rationalism, combining the heritages of empiricism (Hume) and formalism (Leibniz), tending to present all phenomena of nature and society as amenable to logic and observation, 'reasoning', 'calculation' or 'the experimental method', and proclaiming on those grounds the 'end' of irrationalism, 'fetishism', mysticism, and so on. But positivism is a form of rationalism whose internal resilience has grown markedly slacker than was the case in its classical period; conversely, its materialist element, although still present as in any philosophy, occupies an increasingly subordinate position. For in positivism,9 despite its continual proclemations, the struggle against spiritualism and religious ideology becomes altogether formal. Its appearance is no longer that of a partition: on one side, the language and rational, technical operations of science, on the other, the language and 'irrational' rites of religion, 'metaphysics', and 'myth'; on one side, the needs and advances of knowledge, on the other the indissoluble residue of feeling, of pathology.

By granting the 'irrational' character of religion, positivism offers the latter a rosy future. And religion has not failed to accept the role offered it, under cover of complementing scientific knowledge still in need of 'spiritual completion'. Much more than any previous form of rationalism, positivism provides a solid foundation for the development of the couplet rationalism/irrationalism, and for the formation of irrationalist philosophies. In the last analysis, the opposition science/religion (or science/the mystical) bas changed meaning. Its function of combating religion is now only of secondary significance, while it tends first and foremost to counterpose science to the materialist conception of history and to dialectics, presenting them as modern avatars of religion, animism, and so on. Conversely, the juridical ideological basis of rationalism is undergoing a noteworthy shift. No longer is it a question of 'founding' a policy and state form on Law and Reason, whose universal principles emanate from human nature. Indeed, the tendency is in the opposite direction—towards founding the interpretation and practice of law (and even of raison d Etat) on the political opposition between the two types of society: on the one hand, the 'free' societies, on the other, the 'totalitarian' ones that are supposed to realize a certain 'ideology' and impose it on the individual by force (look at the East!).

We are now in a position to understand that positivism can be, for modern capitalism, the dominant form of the dominant ideology (ir philosophy), and, as we shall see more clearly in a moment, the interna basis of irrationalism itself. But the question then arises: how is this

All the more so in the case of contemporary neo-positivism—from Mach to Carnap ar 'heretics' like Popper, whose best-known disciple and defender in France is the emine-biologist Jacques Monod

A word of caution is necessary here. For a whole period, positivism was relatively weawithin the French minerally tradition of philosophy. But this should not obscure the fact the it is the distinct form of philosophical idealism in the modern capitalist world. Nor shoul we be deceived by the fact that present-day positivism is incapable of organizing itself int 'systems' on the model of classical metaphysical rationalism: the form of such a system itself relative in the history of philosophy. Ever since Hegel, the terror that the notio inspires has forced on all idealist philosophy the form of an astr-prism.

'Social Crisis' and Ideological Crisis'

I recalled above, in necessarily schematic form, the interpretation that large number of Communists give of the relations between economicpolitical crisis and ideological crisis, with regard to present-day irrationalist tendencies. According to that interpretation, the bourgeoiste is constrained, by the very nature of the difficulties facing it, to have recourse to irrationalism, to reverse its previous ideological tendency, and toutilize irrationalism as an instrument of its defensive political strategy. Let me put it simply. Taken literally, this analysis seems to me at once idealist and mechanicist. Idealist, because it suggests that the bourgeoisie of today and vesterday exerts complete control over 'its own' ideas: that it invents and 'manufactures' them to meet the needs of its cause, imposing them on the whole of society with a degree of success that depends on its material strength and the resistance it encounters. Mechanicist, because the evolution of the ideological 'instrument' would then refer us to the following undialectical and over-simple schema: in the period of ascendant capital, science (in general) is 'useful' to capital—it serves it and is therefore a positive ideological value; conversely, in the period of crisis and decline, science (in general) is no longer useful to capital—it rises up against it and therefore becomes a negative ideological value.

Now, such is not the meaning of the fundamental Marxist thesis that 'the ruling ideology is the ideology of the ruling class'. The ruling ideology is constituted neither automatically nor upon a decision of the ruling class. The bourgeoisie is materially caught in 'its' ruling ideology: it is determined by the ideology, which, historically speaking, it imposes on society. It does not have the supernatural power 'freely' to invent and vary its ideology, to adapt it like an instrument to the more or less durable and contradictory 'needs' of the conjuncture. Of course, there does exist an ideological policy of the bourgeoisie—and even of a particular fraction (big capital and the State)—which tends to develop and spread certain ideological and philosophical themes by means of the publishing trade, the press and the audio-visual media. The ruling class does indeed dispose of concerted 'ideological management'. But this policy can exist only in determinate material conditions, and in the context of contradictions that it is quite powerless to escape. What is involved here in practice?

One possible explanation would be as follows. In order to act on the ideological plane, the bourgeoisie needs men, especially 'active ideologues' or 'functionaries of ideology'—and not only individuals able to create philosophical, economic or sociological themes, but above all a wass of diverse intellectuals, whether or not they are recognized as such. Now, these latter will not 'parade' up and down like an army. Orders cannot simply be handed down to them for execution. The 'response' of these intellectuals (that is to say, their initiatives and their receptivity) depends on the conjuncture, the state of struggles, the relationship of forces, and the way in which they themselves have been 'formed'. But this explanation is not yet sufficient. In fact, it is circular. The decisive factor is not the men (i.e. the 'minds'), even taken as a whole. It is rather the

which they operate, and hence the structure and contradictions of the historically constituted ideological state apparatures. These materia conditions must be taken into account if we are to analyse (and as far as possible foresee) the ideological effects of the economic and political crisis of capitalism.

As we are dealing with rationalism and irrationalism—and thus with relations between the sciences, philosophy and bourgeois society—let us make a final necessary digression. Ever since its constitution, rationalism has been integrally bound up with a certain organization of intellectual labour (hence of labour tout court)—and especially of scientific labour teaching and the application of the sciences to production. To an essentia degree, the theoretical contradictions of rationalism reflect the inescapable contradictions of the social organization produced by capitalist development. The autonomy and omnipotence of Reason, the mutual application of Reason and Liberty (liberty being founded or freedom of thought), the normative opposition of Reason and Unreason Truth and Error—these typical themes of philosophical rationalism are a: once the expression and the denial of a given social status of intellectual labour and scientific research. For capitalism, whose technical basis is at Marx said 'revolutionary', determines an unprecedented and uninterrupted extension of intellectual labour, elevating it above and abar. from 'manual' labour within the very process of production. At the same time, however, capitalism must control and subordinate to itself this same intellectual labour: it must select the bearers of science and technology rigidly grading the education system, and orient research according to profitability and 'usefulness' (which, more often than not, is unpredictable).

From this point of view, the classical form of rationalism also corresponded to a transitional stage of groping towards an unstable 'equilibrium' between individual scientific labour (left to chance persona 'talents') and direct state intervention in the shape of subsidies and academies. This too was a period when (higher) education remained i narrow privilege, and when mass instruction was left to the priests and parsons. By contrast, positivism is organically linked to socialization of education, scientific research and medicine. It is organically linked to the development of 'public' or 'private' research institutions (particularly universities) which provide intellectual labour with wide-scale materia resources and, thereby, with a necessary twofold illusion. First, the illusion that scientific research and teaching are themselves scientifically organized that the application of technology is 'rational' or 'optimal'. Secondly, the illusion of its own autonomy: the idea that it is in the service not of capital, buof Science, Society, Humanity; that it exists alongside political power exchanging services with it on the basis of an equality of values; and the it stands above the people, the manual workers of town and countryalbeit only on the basis of a democratic hierarchy of merit and education and in order that it may paternalistically return to the people its due it knowledge and technological benefits available to all. As guarantor c

¹⁰ See Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in Laun and Philosoph London 1971

this musory autonomy, positivism is the ofganic philosophy of the bourgeois division of labour.

In order to understand the ideological effects of the historical crisis of capitalism, we must therefore take into account the development of contradictions in the social division of labour and in the functioning of the ideological state apparatuses. The fact that these contradictions are becoming more acute does not spell a break with the bourgeois forms of the division of labour. As we know, such an occurrence cannot precede, but rather presupposes, a revolutionary transformation of capitalist relations of production and the capitalist superstructure. In the epoch of imperialism, the development of the productive forces is more and more wieren, but also more and more rapid. Its contradiction is an internal one (internal to 'the scientific-technological revolution'), and has repercussions on both the character of scientific research and its relation to social production. Capitalism must at one and the same time speed up the process of technological innovation and subject it more tightly to the immediate profitability of big capital; expand scientific and technical training and generalize the relative de-skilling of labour-power; develop social security and the physical upkeep of the worker and ways of exploiting him more intensively, wearing him out. That is why the crisis of capitalism actually breeds irrationalism, which presents the contradictions of the system as if they were resoluble (except on the plane of utopias, 'turning the clock back', or other products of the individual imagination). But this always appears on the ground of positivism—as its complement and apparent inversion. Irrationalism is not, and can never become, the dominant form of bourgeois ideology at the level of society as a whole. It can only signal the acuteness of the contradictions to which the ruling positivism offers an imaginary solution. We have come to our final question.

What is the Main Enemy Today?

The main enemy is not irrationalism (in philosophy), however persistent it may be. We should leave no room for ambiguity on this point. To admit that irrationalism is a secondary ideological enemy involves no compromise on the part of Marxism and the Communists—no underestimation of it either. It must rather lead to precise identification of the modalities of the struggle against irrationalism. We can formulate the task as follows: in the secondary enemy (irrationalism), to set our sights on and combat the main enemy itself (positivism); hence to wage not a defensive, but an offensive struggle, touching the very foundations of the relationship of forces, and finally making it 'budge'. Let us schematically give the reasons for this.

In the very conditions of capitalist crisis, the relative fusion of the different forms of irrationalism (vulgar, philosophical, and the irrationalism of scientists)—2 process that allows it to win recognition as such, by sketching out the union of an esoteric philosophy with a broad world-view, albeit full of gaps—is a phenomenon of the political conjuncture. 11 Why are we

¹¹ It seems to me that we should critically re-assess the question of the relations between irrationalism and fascism. We tended to make of fascism the politico-economic form of decaying capitalism—at the same time as we misertimated, following the Russian Revolution, the real possibilities of impenalist expansion and the time of its collapse.

Minimoning, promoting in reside some, the autaine or meadonamonico front-line position? After all, the French bourgeoisie has been trying since the fifties and sixties to adapt its superstructure of ideological apparatuses (education and culture, the family, politics) to the requirements of 'modern' capitalism; seeking for that purpose to develop the variants of positivism according to the models of Britain, America and Germany, at the expense of the old spiritualist-moral tradition of French idealism. Why then has this frontal attack been arrested? May-June 1968, coming on top of the world defeats inflicted on imperialism, brought the contradictions of the ideological apparatuses into the light of day, and aroused the ideological revolt of masses of young people against the forms of the division of labour in which big capital sought to enclose their future. It thus forced the ruling ideology to make an about-turn—to don (for how long?) the mask of its apparent opposite. Irrationalism is the unstable form of a compromise imposed by circumstances on the ruling ideology without its knowledge: it is at one and the same time the mask of positivism (as ecology and 'zero growth' are the local and provisional masks of capitalist accumulation 18) and the symptom of the resistance it encounters.

Consistent struggle against irrationalism involves an attack on its very roots—on its internal driving force. But, for that very reason, it must not be accepted at face value. In the most significant forms of modern irrationalism—the para-scientific and pseudo-scientific forms that exer the greatest influence—positivism is present to a larger degree than ever In reality, irrationalism never involves more than a fictitious struggle against 'science' and 'technology'; for if it provides a means to limit them it thereby diminishes its capacity to utilize and control these requisites c the capitalist system. Present-day irrationalism (especially the ir rationalism of scientists, which expresses both their profound revolt anthe continuing hold of the dominant ideological relations) nearly alway betrays its positivist determination. Indeed, that is what allows the bi bourgeoisie to 'flirt' with it, in order to strengthen technocratism andefend monopoly capitalism and state capitalism. If irrationalis, criticizes the harmful effects of 'growth', it is in the name of the statistic and forecasts of Harvard computers! If it makes an appeal for utopia, it in the name of the 'objective facts' and 'experimental results' of the soci crisis! If it denounces 'pure science', it is in the name of the 'superic efficacy' of 'folk wisdom' or 'barefoot medicine'l If it attack 'Knowledge' as an institution, a form of repression and an ideology, it in the very name of the positivist conception of the power of science and science as a technical-administrative (logical and social or 'sociological') procedure! This is the determination that must be attacked in order expose the roots of irrationalism.

If this analysis is correct, then our fight against irrationalism can no longbe waged in the name of Reason and rationalism: neither in the name of

13 See on this point Michel Pecheux, Les Vérités de La Pelice, Paris 1975.

¹⁸ Already we hear the explanation: the struggle against pollution and for nature is a 'luxi that the 'underdeveloped' countries cannot afford and that it would be unjust to impose them. In other words, there is to be no artificial obstacle to the industrialization of the 'th world', i.e. to the export of capital!

deviation', nor in that of a 'new' rationalism. Such a course would result in developing not the materialism, but the idealism of scientific workers; not what is revolutionary in their consciousness, but what prevents it from becoming fully so. Above all, it would recoil, with great force upon the camp of Marxism itself, which enjoys no natural 'immunity' in its own development. By thus apparently strengthening its alliance with the natural sciences and productive technology, Marxism would itself be weakened before the bourgeois ideology of 'the human sciences', political economy and politics tout court. As we have seen recently, it must on no account allow economic and political problems to be posed in terms of 'rationality' and 'irrationality'; in terms of logical choices between 'models' of rational social administration (the approach common to the big bourgeoisie and social democracy). It must rather present them in terms of class struggles.

Marxism has to achieve the effective combination of two perspectives, all the more indissociable in that the crisis of capitalism seems more decisive and closer to the nature of present-day social relations. One of these perspectives is 'tactical': respond at once to the change of direction of bourgeois ideology. The other is 'strategic': pape the way for proletarian ideological hegemony, in the perspective of socialist revolution. For, in fact, socialist revolution is the only true 'solution' to the social contradictions of which the development of irrationalism constitutes an ideological symptom. Of course, we are talking not of an automatic, miraculous solution, but of one to be constructed by the historical action of the proletariat, grouping all toilers around itself—a solution whose foundations are already appearing in outline in the political practice of the proletariat. However, this is not a matter of Reason or rationality, a simple alternative to the 'reason' or 'unreason' of monopoly capital and the technocratic division of labour. It is above all a question of struggle, of class struggle.

In essence, then, Marxism is not a 'rationalism'. And that is precisely why, as long as it is and remains alive—which cannot be taken for granted—it can successfully oppose irrationalism. To be more precise, as a philosophy invested in a science and a mode of politics, Marxism is not a theoretical rationalism—in the same sense in which, as has been correctly argued, it is not a theoretical humanism. Marxism arose and has developed both from and against rationalism, as a new, 'consistent' form of materialism—that is, the first to reverse the domination of idealism over materialism that is preserved by rationalism. For at the root of Marxism there lies a dual revolutionary break with rationalism: the constitution of the history of societies as an object of science (which is ruled out by rationalist 'generalization' of 'the laws of nature'); and the break with the secret driving force of that generalization—namely, the point of view taken by paridical ideology in considering social relations.

Does this mean that the philosophical struggle of Marxism is directed equally 'against irrationalism' and 'against rationalism', as if they formed a symmetrical couplet? Of course not. To think that would precisely be to ignore the internal contradiction of the history of philosophy (as well as the way in which Lenin, in particular, treats and makes use of Diderot,

Marxist materialism is *not* a rationalism, and because in a certain sense the latter is its *main* enemy in the couplet rationalism/irrationalism, it can and must draw from careful study of rationalism a number of elements that will prove invaluable in its philosophical struggle. But this alliance, or this support, is subject to two imperative conditions.

First, any thesis or philosophical category so employed must be extracted from the form in which it was produced, so that its basic determining contradiction may come to light, and so that its materialist tendency may be recovered, drawn out and set straight. This requires a new philosophical labour, which consists not of mechanical 'selection', but of genuine transformation. In this process, certain theses and categories will clearly play a much more crucial role than others—especially when they represent the 'excesses' of classical rationalism, of which positivism has ceaselessly tried to rid itself. Most important among these are all categories expressing the objective universality and 'absolute' reality of natural causality, and locating the material interaction of phenomena as the determining cause of their 'motion'.14 Other categories, by contrast, will have to be disarticulated and displaced (for example, experience and totality). Others still will tend to be eliminated (Reason; Human Nature; Pre-established Harmony; the Basis of Knowledge-whether 'a priori' or 'sensory'; Empirical Truth and Rational Truth; de jure and de facto Subject, and so on).

However, the first condition is itself dependent on a second. These philosophical 'elements' must be completed by, or rather subordinated to, other ones which, for their part, have nothing to do with rationalist philosophy and which provide the current basis for any recourse to it. These include philosophical elements—the categories and theses of dialectical materialism: process, contradiction. They include scientific elements of historical materialism, above all original ones that still have to be developed, concerning the social relations of production, ideological social relations, the ideological state apparatuses, and the corresponding forms of class struggle in the epoch of imperialism. Finally, they include political elements, involving proletarian policy towards culture, popula education, the sciences and their place in the social division of labour. Thu Marxists, Communists, have no shortage of work: its very urgence proves that the conditions exist for its successful accomplishment.

Translated by Patrick Camille

¹⁴ In this respect, Althusser has over a period of time repeatedly drawn our attention to the importance of Spinoza's philosophy for Marxism. For Spinoza scandalized both h contemporaries and posterity by reserving the internal structure of classical rationalism-instead of openly or secretly founding recognition of the objectivity of the science of natu on the ideology and freedom of the individual subject, he explains that the only real freedo is a finite and determinate natural power. See the interesting book by P. F. Moreau, Spinosa Paris.

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Aesthetics and Politics

The historic debates of the 1930s between Ernst Bloch, Georg Lukács, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamín and Theodor Adomo have now been assembled into a single volume, with an Afterword by Fredric Jameson. Readers of NLR have dready had a foretaste of its contents: Brecht's sardonic deflation of Lukács, for example, published in NLR 84, has been absorbed with significant rapidity to swell he slim corpus of a Western Marxist aesthetics in dire need of nourishment. But it s only with the coherent ordering of these complex interchanges that we can pose o them some fundamental questions. Why does this pivotal debate take the ecurrent form of a quarrel over 'realism'? What is the political secret of these aried contentions over painting, theatre, fiction? And how are we to receive and ppropriate these polemics today?

consider this curious paradox. A Marxism which had for too long relegated ignifying practices to the ghostly realms of the superstructure is suddenly confronted by a semiotic theory which stubbornly insists upon the materiality of

signified, a transparent container brimfull with the plenitude of a determinate meaning, is dramatically overturned. On the contrary, the signifier must be grasped as the product of a material labour inscribed in a specific apparatus—a moment in that ceaseless work and play of signification whose sheer heterogeneous productivity is always liable to be repressed by the bland self-possession of sign systems. A centuries-old metaphysic of the signified is rudely subverted: the signified is no more than that always half-effaced, infinitely deferred effect of signifying practice which glides impudently out of our reach even as we try to close our fist upon it, scurrying back as it endlessly does into the privilege of becoming a signifier itself.

In trying thus to close our fist upon the signified, we are in fact attempting nothing less than the risible task of nailing down our very reality as human subjects. But what we will nail down, of course, will not be the subject, but the paranoic knowledge of the ego and its various identifications. In this ceaseless cat-and-mouse game, the subject, which is no more than the effect flashed cryptically from one signifier to another, the 'truth' which can be represented only in a discourse from which it is necessarily absented, will hunt frantically for its self-recognition through a whole fun-hall of mirrors, and will end up fondling some fetishized version of that primary self-miscognition which is, in Lacanian mythology, the mirror phase. Terrified of the very linguistic productivity of which it is the endlessly transmittable effect, the subject will attempt to arrest the signifying chain in order to pluck from it some securing signified—a signified within which subject and object will blend infinitely into each other in an eternal carnival of mutual confirmation. The literary names for this are realism and representation—those recurrent moments in which the comedy of writing—the incongruous flailings by which, in heroically attempting to 'refer', it will finally do nothing but designate itself-is gravely repressed for the ritual enthronement of some unblemished meaning which will fix the reading subject in its deathdefying position.

The Evaporation of History

Yet there is a problem. For Marxism was supposed to have something to do with 'history'; and history, in this schema, seems effectively to have evaporated. It is not only a question of the signified, which is now no longer Saussure's obedient if arbitrary echo of the signifier, but an effect which slides along in its own sweet way, sporadically buttoned by a chair of hegemonic signifiers which moves athwart it. It is also a question of thereferent, which we all long ago bracketed out of being. In rematerializing the sign, we are in imminent danger of de-materializing it referent; a linguistic materialism gradually inverts itself into a linguisti idealism. In evolving a practice upon literary texts which every English University greets with a certain nervous contempt, we have playes straight into the hands of the Yale English school. For nothing could suit that particular group of modish academics better than the notion the

¹ Ernst Bloch, Georg Lukács, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adom Assibites and Politics, with a conclusion by Fredric Jameson, London 1978

repulsed; it is to be textualized. And since we have rejected the theological concept of hierarchies, then it is the crassest folly to insist that the proletariat is in principle a more significant text than Adolphe of Crotchet Castle.

Now that 'history' is a text is surely true. But it follows that the text of history, like any other, is constituted by certain determinate absences and contradictions which call for that symptomatic reading which is historical materialism. It also follows, as Fredric Jameson has remarked, that if history is a text it is a text-to-be-(re-)constructed. And that (re)writing of the historical text which is socialist revolution has little in common with that sportive, privatized re-fashioning of the unreadable which characterizes the more decadent works of Barthes. The re-materialization of the signifier has indeed provided the most fruitful impetus in recent Marxist aesthetics; but there is a sense in which, like Wittgenstein's Tractatus, and for rather similar philosophical reasons, it leaves everything exactly as it was. It is instructive to be told, as we are by the later Macherey, that the problem of literary 'realism' inheres in the real conditions and possibilities of a text rather than in some imaginary notion of truth-to-life. But one does not wholly escape a Lukácsian problematic merely by shifting the ground of debate from epistemology to ontology.

Nor is one much more encouraged by the English work which has flown from the European project of re-materializing the signifier—work which, productive and pioneering though it has been, lapses too often into the merest reverential hat-tipping to the idea of historical materialism. In the film journal Screen, for example, we are confronted with what must surely be the most supple, sophisticated materialist criticism to have entered Britain for some while. And yet, perusing still another article in that journal on the complex mechanisms by which a shot/reverse shot reinstates the imaginary, or the devices by which a particular cinematic syntagm permits the inruption of symbolic heterogeneity into the positioned perceptual space of the subject, one is forced to query with a certain vehemence why ideological codes have been so remorselessly collapsed back into the intestines of the cinematic machine. For there seems no doubt that what analyses of this kind too often give us, locked as they are within a formalism which no appeal to Kristeva-against-Shklovsky can temporize, is the barest formal trace of the psychoanalytic structures in and across which the ideological is promulgated. The historical specificity of the ideological codes upon which texts labour is dwindled to the merest gesture. The 'real' is certainly, among other things, that which resists symbolization—that which, posed as the primordial lack of what is empirically given, is at once the internal and external limit on desire, the deathly, elusive heterogeneity which surpasses all that we can ever have. But this is hardly a reason why the authors of such analyses should not attempt to incorporate into their practice something of that historical heterogeneity which seems forever to elude them.

² Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan', Yale France Studies (forthcoming).

at is companyly easy to calicature the adstrictics to which such a case leads—to fantasize that films which draw your attention to the camera thereby impel you out inexorably onto the picket lines. But if that is indeed a caricature, it can hardly be said that some of the aspects of this case's conception of realism are anything less. For realism, in so far as it gims at the fixing of a naturalized representation whose traces of production have been repressed, is by that token intrinsically reactionary: it can form no more than the imaginary space within which the subject sutures the gapings of those discritical discourses which then cunningly permit it the illusion of authorship. The ideological has been reduced to the naturalizing, in a way against which Althusser has specifically warned. In a comical inversion of the aesthetics of Lukács, realism is now the ontological enemy; the problematic has been stood on its head, with all the defiant ferocity of one who was out to abolish its very terms in the first place. And that this should be so is hardly surprising. For there is no 'modernism' without its attendant 'realism'; historically positioned as we are, we cannot possibly identify a 'modernist' text without automatically thinking up the 'realist' canon from which it deviates. Realism and modernism, like signifier and signified, are the binary terms of an imaginary opposition; we are as yet quite unable to pick ourselves up by our philosophical bootstraps out of that metaphysical enclosure into some realm beyond it.

But we might be able, nonetheless, to prise open a little that ideological encirclement in order to allow a whiff of history to enter and contaminate the aesthetic purity of its premises. It might be argued, for example, that in an earlier stage of industrial capitalist accumulation, where the dominant ideological experience was one of fragmentation and nuclearity, literary realism fulfilled a progressive role in revealing covert interconnections—in demonstrating, in short, the power and character of something like a system. It might then be argued that, once that system was indeed fleshed within ideological experience—once industrial capitalism had passed into its monopoly forms-modernism in are arrived upon the agenda as a resistance to precisely all that, exploiting the fragment, the private and the unspeakable, the agonized and irreducible moment, as the lone necessary negation of the apparently 'monolithic society it confronted. Whether or not that is true I do not know; and any such case must beware of lapsing into that despairing, privileged myopis as to the contradictions of late capitalism which marks some of the wilde enunciations of the late Frankfurt School. But some such approach would seem to offer a more fertile mode of enquiry into the realism/modernism debate than those contending dogmatisms which, in ontologizing aesthetic categories, fall directly under the deflating judgements of . Brecht. The tedious predictability with which Lukács produces Thoma-Mann from his sleeve (a writer whose very existence, one sometimes feels is for Lukács no more than the felicitous embodiment of a necessar essence) is matched only by the automatism with which the erstwhil 'materialists' of Tel Quel reach for their Mallarmé, Lautréamont an-Joyce.

The Thirties Debate

Reading the debates in the 1930s between Bloch, Lukács, Brech-Benjamin and Adorno, it is clear that we have been here before. But no

EXECUTY . TOT LIEST GODALES TELEVIALE THE HEAD HAPPENED, MINE ACALA . ALL ITE partly because of that. No debate quite repeats itself, precisely because it has happened once already. We are not, then, just where we thought we were: if we too are plunged into heated contention about the relative ments of art which foregrounds its signifying practices and art which seems to smack potently and politically of the 'real', then it is not only because we are the inheritors of a polemic which dates back at least to the years leading up to the Bolshevik Revolution. It is also that we have inevitably negotiated that historical dispute on our own terms. That is to say, among other things, that a dispute which is quite inseparable from the major crisis of the working class in our century is now in danger of being received in a context where an apparently deadlocked history licenses at once an academic self-indulgence of the signifier, and a frustrated appeal to some 'real' which lacks the full political presence needed to validate it. The thirties argument about realism and modernism raises a whole gamut of questions: theories of 'reflection' and 'commitment'; the place of cognition in art; 'élitist' versus 'popular' artefacts; questions of 'totality', production and contradiction. But none of those questions, enduringly valid though they are, were finally dissociable from the fact of fascism, as the Brecht/Lukács contention well enough demonstrates. The experimental forms which for Brecht are an urgent imperative in the struggle against fascism are for Lukács precisely part of the 'irrationalist' heritage of which fascism is the grotesque culmination.

Behind this antagonism, it would seem, lie opposing assumptions about the problem of 'rationality' itself. For Lukács, in his classic epistemological coupling of empiricism and idealism, the rational is what faithfully reflects the real. What is striking about Lukács's aesthetics is that they play upon some quite unexamined shift from 'fact' to 'value'. Throughout his extensive, well-nigh preternaturally self-consistent ourse, Lukács seems for the most part merely to assume that a correct epistemology and ontology will produce significant art—given, of course, the appropriate mastery of 'technique', which for Lukács sometimes seems little more important than acquiring the knack of riding a bicycle. The question which his work leaves in suspension—2 question so enormous and banal as to be effectively invisible—is simply: why should accurate cognition and representation of the real afford aesthetic gratification? What is the unargued nexus here between description and evaluation? It is no doubt possible for at to supply some answer to this question-along the lines, perhaps, of the regressive pleasure to be afforded by that fixing of the object which is the 'imaginary'. But it is surely revealing that Lukács himself feels on the whole no need to confront this issue, just as the Romantic poet feels no need to argue why living among mountains should make you morally purer. It just is the case that art which gives us the 'real' is superior art.

Now there is a sense in which Brecht would agree; but his sense of 'rationality' surely differs in important respects from Lukács's. For Brecht, it is not quite that art can 'give us the real' only by a ceaseless activity of dislocating and demystifying; it is rather that this u, precisely, its yielding of the real, not a mere prelude to the dramatic moment when the transcendental signified will emerge in all its glory. Brecht's practice is

object as it really is; it is to persuade us into living a new discursive and practical relation to the real. 'Rationality' for Brecht is thus indissociable from scepticism, experiment, refusal and subversion. It is not a matter, as with Lukács, of delving through ideological deformations of the object in order to foreclose all upon the reassuring embrace of the 'real', the artistic or theoretical reproduction of which is then 'rational'. It is rather for Brecht a question of rationality as practice and production, a flexing and redoubling of consciousness which must cannily beware of resting finally in the bosom of even the most apparently plausible 'representation of the real'.

For Lukács, there is an internal bond between the object and a proper (theoretical or aesthetic) knowledge of it; 'essences' have the force they do in his system because they are flushed with all the heady Hegelian potency of the rational itself, and will transmit something of that power to any text which succeeds (for what remain largely mysterious reasons) in suspending its active ideological prejudices. The discourse of the textunrolls alongside the world and transparently gives us its truth; but then, as with the early Wittgenstein, that same discourse cannot possibly let us in on the secret of how on earth it comes to do anything as mysterious as that. It is that question, precisely, which plagues and delights the 'modernist' work. Brecht's cunning of reason, however, is no property of the object, but that cunning of dialectical thought within which the object is endlessly constructed and deconstructed, conjured up and torn apart. The aesthetic pleasure his art affords, then, is that of the 'symbolic' rather than the 'imaginary'—although it certainly (how could it not?) includes the latter too.

Now both of these notions of rationality are in some sense at odds with Stalinism. Lukács, in striving to preserve the power of 'critical reason', fought what compromised rearguard action he could against the Comintern's more 'irrational' excesses; but by the same token his stand upon that concept of reason, inherited as it was from bourgeois aesthetics and philosophy, rejoined at crucial points the counterrevolutionary betrayals of Stalinism itself. Brecht, for his part, sustained in his artistic practice a version of rationality which, in its critical, concrete, agnostic interrogating, ran counter to the whole weight of Stalinist orthodoxy, but which, in its associated prudence, could find a certain nervous accommodation within it. (It sometimes faintly surprises me, on reading the transcript of Brecht's appearance before the McCarthy Committee that on being asked 'Is your name Bertolt Brecht?' he did not instantly reply 'No'.) Not only accommodation, indeed, but shabby complicity for those among the Western Left for whom Brecht is now: revolutionary cult-figure and Lukács a tedious humanist, it is salutary to be reminded, as we are in one of this volume's Presentations, of the contrast between Lukács's courageous, clear-eyed participation in the Hungarian workers' uprising, and the 'mixture of truculent bluff and sentimental pathos' with which Brecht responded to the 1953 struggles is the DDR.

What we are trying to comprehend, in seeking to define the difference between two kinds of rationality, is perhaps nothing less than the Marxist concept of contradiction. For Brecht, social reality was contradictory in its very being; but then consider what strange tricks language plays if. like Lukács, you replace the word 'being' there with 'essence'. In his reply to Bloch's defence of Expressionism, Lukács speaks in one sentence of the artefact having a 'surface of life sufficiently transparent to allow the underlying essence to shine through', and writes a few lines later of art 'grasp[ing] hold of the living contradictions of life and society'. But it is surely very strange to think at once in terms of essence and contradiction. For one meaning of 'contradiction' simply cancels the whole notion of 'essence'; it is only the reifying ploys of Hegelian parlance which allow us to conceptualize contradiction as unity. That Lukács, like the rest of us but more than some, remains the prisoner of a metaphysical problematic is perhaps nowhere better demonstrated than in this. The capitalist social formation is a totality of contradictions; what therefore determines each contradiction is the unity it forms with others; the truth of contradiction is accordingly unity. It would be hard to think up a more flagrant contradiction. One has only to ponder the nuanced distinction between arguing that 'contradiction is essential to capitalism', and that 'the essence of capitalism is contradiction', to recognize how extraordinarily difficult it is for any of us to think ourselves outside that crippling essence/phenomenon 'model' which is for Lukács the very key to historical truth. For we certainly do not erase that dichotomy by rendering a substantive as an epithet. And it sometimes seems the case that Lukács tries to unpick this knot in our thinking by conceiving of contradiction as the diachronic putting-into-motion of a synchronic essence. But if Lukács employs the essence/phenomenon model in ways from which we all find it difficult to extricate ourselves, it is also true that some of the uses to which he puts this duality, in his polemic with Bloch, are nothing but blatantly disreputable. The artist, for Lukács, must first abstract the essence of reality, then 'conceal' that essence in his text by recreating it in all its 'immediacy'. Successful texts, in short, 'know the truth', but a function of that is their capacity to pretend that they do not. The effective text is like the circus acrobat whose spontaneous mid-air cavortings are meant to conceal from us the fact that he is all the time suspended from the high wire.

For Lukács, 'immediate' experience is inescapably 'opaque, fragmentary, chaotic and uncomprehended'; it is only by the good offices of the 'totality' that we can see life steadily and see it whole. So art which merely reflects immediate experience is accordingly doomed to distortion. Bloch retorts that Expressionism, by reflecting the immediacy of a particular capitalist crisis, performed a progressive role; but in failing to seize an opportunity to shift the very terms of the debate, he remains here an unwilling captive of the Lukácsian problematic. For what is at stake is not whether this or that art-form, in reflecting 'immediate' experience, can lay claim to 'progressive' status; it is rather a matter of challenging that Lukácsian empiricism (the logical bedfellow of his idealism) which would believe that there is ever anything called 'immediate experience' in the first place. Expressionist and surrealist art, need it be said, are every bit as

different products of ideological labour, not between 'experience' and the 'real'. It is only because Bloch fatally places himself on the ground of 'reflection' theory that this point is damagingly conceded to Lukácsian doctrine. For Lukács, true knowledge is a knowledge of the whole; ideology is the sensuous empirical which distracts you from that insight, too close to the eyeball to be proficiently mediated. It is difficult to see that this adequately represents the difference between Marx and Ricardo.

Brecht's achievement, unlike this particular contribution of Bloch, was precisely to have shifted the very terms of the 'realism' disputation. Caught though Brecht was from time to time within much the same epistemology as Lukács (he writes, for example, of artefacts 'making possible the concrete, and making possible abstraction from it'), it is true even so that, for Brecht, realism can only be, so to speak, retrospective. You thus cannot determine the realism of a text merely by inspecting its intrinsic properties. On the contrary, you can never know whether a text is realist or not until you have established its effects—and since those effects belong to a particular conjuncture, a text may be realist in June and anti-realist in December. So although I have just indicated a certain parallelism between the epistemologies of Brecht and Lukács, it is nonetheless crucial to take the force of that verb 'making possible'. A text may well 'potentialize' realism, but it can never coincide with it; to speak in this way of 'text' and 'realism' is in an important sense a category mistake. Texts are no more than the enabling or disabling occasions for realist effectivity. If you want to know whether your play was realist, why not ask the audience? Did it, in their estimation, 'discover the causal complexes of society / unmask the prevailing view of things as the view of those who are in power/write from the standpoint of the class which offers the broadest solutions for the pressing difficulties in which human society is caught up/emphasize the element of development/make possible the concrete, and make possible abstraction from it? And if not is it audience or text which needs to be rewritten? A difficult question, for sure: a question on the qualification of which the whole of Brecht's dramaturgy turns. The second most important of Brecht's achievement (I will come later to what seems to me to be his first) is to have replaced the aesthetic and ontological definitions of realism proffered by Lukáci with political and philosophical ones. One might say quite simply of his practice, to adapt one of his own adages: realism is as realism does.

The Appeal of Benjamin

Now if Brecht is currently something of a cult figure among Wester-Marxists, Benjamin is proving himself a close second. And that this is something to wester-should surprise no one. For who could be more appealing to Wester-Marxists than a writer who manages marvellously to combine all the vigorous iconoclasm of a materialist 'production aesthetics' with the entrancing esotericism of the Kabbala? Who indeed could speak to use more persuasively, torn as we are between media technology and idealist meditation? In the doomed, poignant figure of a Benjamin we fin

Assibates and Politics, p. 82. In the interests of grammatical consistency, I have altered to aspect of this quotation from present participle to present tense.

undreamt-of emancipation and persistent delight in the contingent. Indeed it is clearer than ever, reading Benjamin's The Origin of German Tragic Drama, that it would be quite false abruptly to dichotomize his career into 'esotericism' and 'materialism'. For nothing is quite so striking as the way in which that early idealist document recapitulates, even before they had properly started, all the obsessive themes of Benjamin's later opports.

Baroque allegory lays bare the device, posing motto and caption into some blunt, obtrusive relation with the visual figure which defeats the conflating mystifications of symbolism. In the dense hieroglyphics of this penre, writing comes to receive all its material weight—but this in a dialectical way, since, in an astounding arbitrariness of signification, any figure or object can come to mean absolutely anything else. Objects in such spectacles are always strictly coded, in a discourse which is as far as Jacques Derrida himself would wish from the speaking voice; and images, far from being hierarchically ranked, are piled in a seemingly haphazard way one on the other, with no 'totalizing' aim in mind. Yet for all that the drama is ostentatiously a construction: 'The writer must not conceal the fact that his activity is one of arranging'. Its diverse, elaborate elements submit inexorably to a structure which yet forever refuses to unite them, allowing them their jarring particularity and glittering ornamentation. 'Shock' is thus an essential feature of such texts: the baroque, for Benjamin, is nothing if not provocative and offensive. The allegorist is spontaneously anti-Hegelian: the 'essence', rather than lurking behind the object as its repressed secret, is dragged into the open, hounded into the brazen status of a caption.

If it is true that the action of such melancholic dramas moves with a certain lumbering, heavy-handed slowness, it is also true that situations can change in a flash. Objects in such texts are fanatically collected, but then slackly and indifferently dispersed in their arrangement; and the very form of the Transrspiel reproduces this irregular impulse, since it builds act upon act in the 'manner of terraces', repulsing any suave linearity of presentation for a syncopated rhythm which oscillates endlessly between swift switches of direction and inert consolidations into rigidity. The Transcripiel is above all a written form, agonizedly conscious of the clogging materiality of the sign, obscurely aware of the voice itself as a form of script. Its imagery rudely dismembers the human body in order to allegorize its discrete parts, sundering its organic unity (in a manner analogous, perhaps, to Freud's) so that some meaning may be rescued from its scattered fragments. Like Benjamin's own later philosophy of history, the Traserspiel, obsessed with the transience of the present and the need to redeem it for eternity, blasts coherences apart in order to salvage them in their primordial givenness.

It is surely clear that what we have here, even as early as Origin, are all the seeds of Benjamin's later championship of Brecht. The drama as fragmented, non-hierarchical, device-baring, shock-producing; theatre as dispersed, gear-switching and dialectical, ostentatious and arbitrary yet densely codified: what Benjamin discovered in Brecht was precisely how you might do all this and be non-melancholic into the bargain. And the

itself constituted by them. For there is hardly an epithet used by Benjamin to describe his object of study which does not glance sideways at his own critical method. That this is so, yet that he succeeds in displacing rather than reproducing the texts in question, is surely one of the book's most notable triumphs.

Adorno and Negativity

Benjamin's antagonist in the 1930s was Adomo, who also later turned to attack Lukács, Brecht and Sartre. Lukács and Adorno might be said to represent between them the 'positive' and 'negative' moments of Hegelian Marxism, as the difference between their literary styles well enough indicates—between the measured, mouth-filling, Olympian pronouncements of a Lukács, and the dense, devious enigmas of an Adorno. If Lukács seeks to correct ideological error with the full blast of the 'real', Adorno aims more and more to outflank and embarrass it by the guerrilla tactics of a discourse which deconstructs the rash positivity of another's speech into a negativity so dire as to threaten to vanish into its own dialectical elegance. As Adomo sinks steadily into disillusion, his language becomes little more than a temporary agitation, inscribing across itself the trace of a resistance to that which evoked it into being in the first place. Minima Moralia, in its bizarre mixture of probing insight and patrician grousing, reveals the trajectory which will lead to Negative Dielectics—a text which, for all its verbose presence, is finally clinched on the silence which supposedly follows from Auschwitz.

It is, then, with a certain historical irony that we now read the thirties Adorno taking Benjamin to task for his neglect of historical materialism—the Adorno who must inevitably figure for us as the mar who, along with Max Horkheimer, delivered to the world the doleful news that the Volkswagen had spelt the death of metaphysics. Yet there is, perhaps, a certain unity between the earlier critic of Benjamin and the later upbraider of Lukács, Brecht and Sartre. Almost all of Adorno's penetrating criticisms of Benjamin's Passagenarbeit come down to equestion of dialectics: the unity of his particular chidings of Benjamin i that his texts are in one way or the other undialectical, or indeed correction violation of dialectics only to fall foul of another. Either Benjamin spirits away historical fidelity in his theoretical zeal, or he topples ove into a theoretically unmediated positivism.

That much of this is true seems clear; but the two-prongedness o Adorno's critique seems oddly to presage some of the difficulties in whic' he found himself later. For the later Adorno refuses at once the 'positivis tyranny of the self-identical object, and the obverse tyranny of the totalizing thought which threatens to swallow it up. Dialectics dig the object free from its illusory self-identity, but threaten thereby to liquidatic within some ghastly concentration camp of the Absolute Idea. For the later Adorno, then, the merest trace of 'positivity' becomes a peril, just: any hint of resisting the stubborn presence of the real poses a totalitariamenace. For discourse to refer, even protestingly, is for it to becominstantly complicit with what it criticizes; in a familiar linguistic an psychoanalytic paradox, negation negates itself because it cannot help be

compromised by the very fact of being such; and it follows that what one is left with is the purest imprint of the gesture of negation itself, the prototype of which, for Adomo, is modernist and post-modernist art.

It is surely not difficult to see how this pessimism is implicit in the very premises of Hegelian Marxism. For if you rewrite Hegel in terms of Marx, the proletariat will play the role of the 'negation'. But it will never be quite as pure a negation as you want: rather than presenting itself as the absolute other of the system, it will reveal itself, not least at times when the class struggle has been tranquillized, as part of the system itself, as an effect of the process of capital. The political reality of the proletariat will fail to live up to its philosophical idea; and it is then always possible to abandon the proletariat and shift the idea somewhere else, into art or the third-world peasantry, philosophy or the student movement. The theoretical achievements of the 'neo-Hegelians' will stand, in many cases, as enduring monuments within Marxism; but it is true, nevertheless, that the political destiny of the Frankfurt School (and, indeed, of Lucien Goldmann) was always to some degree written into its founding assumptions.

If Adorno's aesthetics are in one sense the polar opposite of the oppressively 'positive' assertions of a Lukács, there is another sense in which they are their mirror-image. The Hegelian tradition, of which Adomo, despite himself, is an inheritor, could always move either wayinto an affirmation of those positive essences which underly the 'negativity' of immediate experience, or into an insistence on those essences' sheer negating force. Adomo and Lukács to that extent share the same problematic, as indeed the former's dazzingly caustic review of the latter's discreditable Meaning of Contemporary Realism would suggest. 'Art is the negative knowledge of the actual world': wholly opposed though Adorno and Lukács are on so many central aesthetic issues, they nonetheless link hands in the assumption that art enables a cognition of essences. Lukács had from the outset fetishized the 'totality'; Adomo will end up by fetishizing the particular. (And, it might be added, by fetishizing the 'fetishism of commodities'—almost the only item of classical Marxism, one feels, which he seems able to rescue from the rubble.) If for Adomo art is something like what it is for Brecht—critical, subversive—it criticizes and subverts in an essentialist way not far removed from Lukácsian orthodoxy. It is just that, for Adomo, art becomes the negative essence of the real, carries those contradictions on its head, rather than (as for Lukács) reflecting those contradictions in its content but repulsing them in its form.

The Missing Term

If one were to submit this debate to some structuralist combinatorre, it would surely become apparent that there was a missing term. What we have so far, if I may use the crudely reductive terminology suitable to such schemes, is: an idealist realist (Lukács); two idealist modernists (Bloch, Adorno); a materialist modernist (Brecht); and a modernist who blends elements of both idealism and materialism (Benjamin). The unoccupied location, then, is a 'materialist realist': there is no such

The fourth of the state of the that this is so might suggest who, in the end, has had the upper hand. But another term stands out in this combination, to perceive which requires no structuralist sophistication. Of Bloch, Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno, only Brecht is comic. I do not mean simply that he is humorous, although that is important enough: parodying Lukács's idea of 'rounded' characters, he rejects the notion of a literary canon 'filled with nothing but durable characters . . . from Aeneas to Nekhlyudov (who is he, by the way?)'. And NLB gravely appends the appropriate footnote. I mean also that Brecht stands ideologically apart from that 'Western Marxist' melancholy which in its various ways broods over the other four, and infiltrates the very sinew of their prose styles. It is not surprising that Brecht is at once unmelancholic and cultivates the alienation effect; for few things are funnier than auto-referentiality. It lays bare the inherent comedy of all discourse, which pivots on the 'virtual' presence of objects it necessarily absents. Brecht once commented that Hegel was comic because his shiftings from level to level had the effect of wit; and though we might consider such a reading of Hegel as heroic as Harriet Martineau's ability to weep tears of joy over Comte, it reveals the tenacity with which he grasped the very character of comedy.

There has been, so far as I know, no Marxist theory of comedy to date; tragedy has been a considerably more successful contender for the attention of materialist criticism. And there are good enough reasons why Marxism has suspected the comic: for what after all could more securely rivet us in our ideological places, having provisionally jolted us out of them? But if traditional comedy shakes us out of those places only to allow us wryly to rejoin them, Brecht's theatre is comic in a more radical sense. Its comedy lies in its insight that any place is reversible, any signified may become a signifier, any discourse may be without warning rapped over the knuckles by some meta-discourse which may then suffer such rapping in its turn. To adopt one of Brecht's own phrases: if one wanted an aesthetic (of the comic), one could find it here. And all this is somewhat removed from, even if it relates to, that delight in auto referentiality which, as in the later Barthes, turns on what is still the essentially privatized, de-politicized notion of *jourseauxe*.

The comic, for Brecht, comes down to the double-take; it is thus in the first place a formal matter, not a question of 'content'. But in that question of comic form everything is at stake: it is here that we find th profoundest nexus between Brecht's alienation effect and his politica Brecht's major achievement is surely to teach us the deep comedy of meta language, which in distantiating its object displays just where it is itse' most vulnerable, revealing the vacuum into which another putativ discourse could always rush to take it over. We know, as Jameson poinout in his fine concluding meditation to this volume, that any attemt now to invent some language posterior to Marxism will inevitably inve itself back into some variant of pre-Marxist discourse; but we should nofor all that, forget that Marxism, for all the tragedies which make up > content, is in Brecht's sense deeply and enduringly comic. The on reason for being a Marxist is to get to the point where you can stop beir one. It is in that glib, feeble piece of wit that much of the Marxie enterprise is surely summarized.

Whatever the historical provenance of the various aesthetic positions taken up in these interchanges, their immediate historical impetus is surely plain. It is nothing less than the greatest defeat which the working-class movement has so far suffered in this century. And perhaps the most significant way of deciphering what is finally at stake in these polemics is to see each aesthetic case as some kind of mediated response to precisely that historical moment. As history lurches closer to its holocaust, Lukács tries to arrest that collapse by reaching back and summoning all the resources of what is for him the lonely lineage of Reason. Brecht reacts quite differently; if working-class consciousness is to be prised free from what paralyses it, then every available technique of shock, irony, assault and indirection must be exploited. Benjamin shares this view, but is also concerned to plant the seeds of a new relationship to the past, salvaging it from the savage obliteration with which the present threatens it. Adomo clings for his part to the liberating thrust of dialectical negation, which, since it is less and less easy to locate in the proletariat, comes to take up its home in the very forms of art itself. To see the debate in this way is also to illuminate the question of aesthetic genre—a question which is all along more important than any of the antagonists admit. Lukács's faith in Enlightenment naturally leads him to the novel, the repository of a traditional rationality. Brecht and Benjamin, devoted to the task of refashioning the very substance of contemporary ideology, are men of the theatre and the more recent 'media'. Adorno was always first and foremost a musicologist, producing pioneering work in the least 'referential' of aesthetic modes.

The realism/modernism dissensions of the 1930s are naturally not to be reduced to their political moment. Historically they go back far beyond it, and raise politico-aesthetic questions of perennial importance. But our own appropriation of the controversy is necessarily a complex affair. For it is for one thing impossible that our present contentions over modernism and realism, 'text' and 'work', signifier and signified, displacement and representation, could be flushed with anything like the historical urgency which, often poignantly, informs this book. It could hardly be said that those today who most scandalously champion the telltale sign give off much sense of the dust and heat of class struggle. And that this is so is perhaps not fortuitous: for it can at least be argued that what is now for us the most fertile theoretical source of such notions contemporary semiotics and its varied progeny—thrived precisely in that political vacuum of the 1950s and 1960s, in which a relatively becalmed class struggle afforded petty-bourgeois intellectuals some provisional space in which to play. It would doubtless be vulgar to-'explain' the growth of semiotics in this way; it would seem foolish to overlook it. For us, the Owl of Minerva seems to have flown with the lark: aesthetic theory has outstripped artistic practice to the point where theoretical texts seem sometimes to offer themselves as their own artefacts simply for the lack of any others. Our own polemics about the desirable character of 'revolutionary' film or theatre stumble not so much over theoretical divergencies as over a rather more recalcitrant fact: what revolutionary film or theatre?

the thirties aestheticians did not in some ways face similar problems. For them too there was a disabling gap between, to use NLB's efficiently encapsulating phrase, art which was 'subjectively progressive and objectively élitist, [and art which was] objectively popular and subjectively regressive' (p. 66). And we ourselves, coming after Benjamin, share the unwelcome wisdom that the technology in which he placed so much trust has aggravated this dichotomy more than it has alleviated it. But one difference between our historical situations is that, whereas we still occupy a precarious, privileged space which permits us the dubious luxury of absolute judgements (realism is regressive; modernism is formalistic), this could not have been so for a Brecht. The deadly advance of Nazism would not halt for the crystallization of such an assured aesthetic. Instead Brecht used everything he had to hand, impudently leaving the traditional aesthetic strictures to a Lukács. That he was in this sense a pathological bricoleur is one of his virtues, but also, clearly enough, a failing. The Brechtian 'left-utilitarianism' of which NLB perceptively speaks (p. 148) will not do in the end, any more than will the aesthetic academicism of a Lukács. And this has an immediate bearing on the whole problem of the relationship between bourgeois and revolutionary art, where Brecht's wily opportunism is finally no more of an adequate solution than Lukács's stately teleology. For a somewhat more subtle formulation, we may perhaps turn to the Benjamin of the 'Theses on the Philosophy of History's—to the Benjamin who, astute traditionalist that he was, wished to redeem what was still of value in the past, but insisted that this could be done only by blasting past objects out of their naturalizing continuum, submitting them to the deadly impact of new thoughts. Benjamin's vision of history, inextricable as it is from the most mournful, tortured aspects of his sensibility, is also no ultimate resting-place; but it is in its own way one of the theoretical gains of this fertile epoch.

So the debate seems to repeat itself. But the first time was not wholly tragedy, for we are, after all, still here; the dead who speak to us in this volume have been to that extent made safe from fascism, as Benjamis feared they might not. It is up to us to ensure that the second time is no farce.

In Illuminations, London 1970.

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Introduction

Few areas of the world have presented such complex problems of appraisal for socialists as the Horn of Africa in the past three years. Many factors have contributed to this: geographical and cultural inaccessibility; war-time conditions limiting the circulation of individuals and the availability of information; opaque institutional specificities of the political scene in Addis Ababa, Mogadishu and Djibouti; the intersection of national with social conflicts, and of each with shifting international alliances. Amidst many uncertainties, however, two facts are salient and indisputable. First, and of far the greatest significance for the long-run future of the region, is the profundity of the social revolution unleashed in Ethiopia with the overthrow of the imperial dynasty in 1974—a process whose dynamic is still unfolding, yet whose final outcome remains highly unpredictable. Unlike the overwhelming majority of black African states, Ethiopia possessed an age-old feudal anstocracy, of mediaeval privilege and rapacity. The depth of the popular upheaval which finally erupted against it was commensurate with the rigidity of a traditional social hierarchy unknown anywhere else on the continent. Ethiopian politics under the Republic has, for all its military capping, owed its turbulence essentially to the explosive awakening of the rural and urban masses. The trim procedures of rule in Somalia, by contrast, are those of a country with s visibly shallow political experience.

Secondly, it is clear that the Somali régime launched a concerted invasion of Ethiopia in 1977—an enterprise of another order from the prior national conflicts in the region. The ethnic composition of the Ogader. was no different in 1967 or 1970. Yet the tyranny of Haile Selassie neves attracted a comparable attack: the rulers of Mogadishu have reserved their irredentist armour for the fledgeling republic that liberated Ethiopia from it. The international result so far is well known. Somalia, once an ally of the USSR, is now firmly tied to Iranian and Saudi interests—indeed is frantically seeking any counter-revolutionary or imperialist backing while Ethiopia, in Haile Selassie's day Washington's best friend in the region, is now fighting for its survival with Soviet and Cuban assistance Internally, meanwhile, the socio-economic developments which have transformed the old order in Ethiopia have not been adequately charter by Marxists outside the country, nor has its peculiarly intricate political terrain been intelligibly mapped or interpreted; while the form of : comprehensive and socialist solution of the nationalities problem—o

which the most serious and intractable remains that or printed who be determined.

We print below two documents of interest, published in the daily newspaper of the Italian Communist Party Unità, on the situation in the Horn of Africa. It is explicable that the Italian Left should have been more concerned than that of any other Western country with events in the region. The Italian ruling class after the Risorgimento colonized Somalis and coveted Abyssinia, as it was then known. Its ambitions later culminated in Mussolini's conquest of Ethiopia in 1935-6 and an Italian occupation which lasted until 1941; while Italian control of Somalia persisted until 1960. In the recent conflict, the PCI initially leant towards the Somali government, with whom it had traditionally enjoyed good relations. The dispatch of Gian Carlo Pajetta, the foreign affairs spokesman of the PCI—a veteran of the Comintern and a representative of the Left within the party—on a mission of enquiry and mediation to the two countries, has led to a change of emphasis: the interview with Pajetta printed here strikes a more judicious note, and is noteworthy for a new sensitivity to the nature and direction of the social process under way in Ethiopia. The accompanying report by Emilio Amade of Unità, another member of the PCI delegation, gives a vivid and instructive account of what can be seen even on a short visit to Addis. The initiative of the PCI in the Horn is to be welcomed, asn internationalist intervention beyond the potentially provincial horizons suggested 'Eurocommunism'.

The course of events in the Horn of Africa poses two problems for revolutionary socialists elsewhere. The first is to assess the stage which the class struggle, and the institutional forms it has thrown up, have reached in Ethiopia—to assess the point at which they could be said to have moved qualitatively further against capitalism and its state machinery than, say, in Algeria under Ben Bella or Portugal under Gonçalves. The second is to define a just and reasonable position on the national question, in its regional context, without accommodation to any form of chauvinist intransigence. The two texts presented here are intended to assist this necessary process of clarification.

documents

Ethiopia's Troubled Road

How difficult and protracted is a revolution! How much blood it costs, when the contradictions within society and between its component forces have not been resolved! And when the 'cadres' who ought to be leading the revolution fall every day (or night) beneath the blows of faceless enemies!

Two weeks ago, less than twenty-four hours after we arrived in Addis Ababa, we felt the reality and enormity of this price in a direct and painful way. We had asked to see Haile Yesus, the representative of the Ethiopian revolution who scarcely two months earlier had visited Italy in a first direct encounter with our society. 'Haile Yesus who?', we were asked. 'Haile Yesus Walde Senbet.' It was a Wednesday afternoon. Yes, they said, they would look for him.

Someone else found him. The next day, on Thursday afternoon, Haile Yesus Walde Senbet was shot down on the main road separating the Hilton Hotel from the Foreign Ministry. This should have been one of the quietest areas of Addis Ababa, that 'new flower' founded by Emperor Menelik: 8,000 feet above sea level, a cluster of hills covered with conifers and slim eucalyptus trees, mud-huts and walled houses, modern apartment buildings and near-skyscrapers—each with lift, roof-top bar and restaurant. All once part of the personal fortune of Haile Selassie, the emperor overthrown in 1974.

So, all we saw of Walde Senbet was a newspaper photo under the heading. 'Burial of our fallen comrades'— the others being a sergeant and a corporal who had been killed in error by a defence-squad of the kebels (the basic organizations in Ethiopian towns today). Many more die, or risk dying, condemned by a phone-call or letter giving notice of 'execution'. Three days after Walde Senbet's death, we were reading his obituary in the papers—it was an exemplary story, of a man whose political maturation kept pace with the 'acceleration of history' taking place ir Ethiopia—when suddenly we heard a single pistol-shot in the street From the window we could see, less than a hundred yards away, people running and gathering about a shape on the ground; there was someone fleeing, pursued by someone else pointing a pistol. Later, we went to tall with four leaders of the all-Ethiopian trade unions—organizations that rose from the ashes of the old federation, which had been a key instrument of the imperialist system. One of these leaders had spent four months in hospital after being wounded by the volley of shots that killed

earlier, on Sunday, they had shot at him while he was on his way home He was Gedlu Tekle, 'first vice-president' of the unions, and now the figure with the highest responsibility. There was no president because the successor to the one killed a few months previously had himself been assassinated.

These are just the facts which are on everyone's lips: many others are part of 'normal life'. Ten minutes after the murder witnessed from the window of our lodgings (which were somewhat more modest than the Hilton), life was going on as before: the crowd was once more streaming along the payements and covering the scene of the tragedy with ordinary, everyday activity. Was the crowd indifferent then? Well, we later visited a kebele that was celebrating the anniversary of the 'Association of Proletarians'—that is, the local workers and artisans, who are actually more artisans than workers. Gathered beneath a marquee that had been drawn across a courtyard against the blazing sun, these 'proletarians' too seemed indifferent. They sat silently at long, rough-hewn log tables, after buying their token from the cash-desk for a tw (the Ethiopian drink made from fermented honey) or a portion of chili-flavoured stew. As Italian rice-workers used to do, they listened in silence to a woman singing at the top of her voice, and the ardour of the song seemed to pass over without touching them. In the middle of the number, an old man suddenly stood up and harangued the crowd, speaking fiercely and with an anger that neither he nor anyone else had exhibited a moment before.

He said that the 'class enemies' should be destroyed. He used the actual term 'class enemies'—beings which this kebels had first encountered a few days earlier, when someone had driven a car at top speed through the neighbourhood firing from the window. But the structure of the new organization had passed the test: nearby kebels were alerted and their defence-squads blocked the path of the car. In the two-hour gunfight that followed, two 'class enemies' were killed and two more captured. One of these was a girl—just as, outside the kebels offices, it was girls who stood guard, wearing the pistols with which they had fought their battle against the 'counter-revolutionaries'.

Addis Ababa thus seems to have become the focal point of social contradictions. Through a radical egalitarian land reform and through the nationalization of urban land and privately owned dwellings in excess of a single apartment per person, the revolution has swept away age-old privileges and dazzling riches accumulated out of a sea of misery. This is why the situation in the capital is as it is today. One day we spoke with Dr Alemu Abebe, candidate for the office of mayor. (The kabala elect three, candidates, of whom one is chosen by the government to occupy the highest office in the capital. Of the three candidates, one had already been murdered.) Alemu smiled when we expressed our fears. 'Why be worried? For my physical well-being, perhaps?' And after this roguish piece of self-irony, he told us why the situation has developed precisely in this way.

'Deprived of their lands, the reactionaries have left the countryside and come to the towns.' The mechanism was as follows: the dispossessed

nandowners mist took reluge in the vinages, attempting to use them as base for organizing the forces of reaction. But as the peasant association gathered strength the landowners had to leave the villages for the sma towns. Kebele exist there, as in Addis Ababa, but, given the different social structure, they are in practice peasant associations. Thus, in the sma towns too, the air became unbreathable for the landlords, who had t move for shelter to the big urban centres. When, a year ago, the peasar associations 'purified' the atmosphere there, the last remaining refuge wa Addis Ababa—a city in which such measures had to have governmen approval. In some cases, peasants came to the capital to take back the landowners. But that could not go on. Living here, then, are many forme landowners, big traders and speculators, who have some money an certain links with the bureaucrats, for whom the matter has become political problem. You know, when the peasants meet to discuss the problems, they vote on resolutions at the end of the session. And there always one who says: 'We want our reactionaries back.' They do no understand how there can be so much counter-revolutionary activity i Addis Ababa, and so they think we are not doing enough. They tell us: ? you can't do it by yourselves, we'll come and help you.'

In the countryside there are 26,000 peasant associations, with a total c 6 million members. The towns are covered by kebsle of which there are 289 in the capital, organized into twenty-five central kebsle (much as, i Italy, pci neighbourhood committees are grouped into regions committees). But the effective powers of the kebsle extend to loca administration, justice and self-defence. According to Dr Alemu' calculations, if we include the kebsle, all their component committees, an all the bodies of this new form of organization (such as the arme revolutionary defence squads), then no fewer than 40,000 of the capital' population of 1,200,000 are directly and personally involved in cit administration. This presents a striking and favourable contrast with the situation of little more than three years ago. Under the emperor, the cit council was appointed from above and its members had to be 'prominen citizens'— prominent, that is, in terms of wealth—who could onl express opinions, not take decisions.

The present system tackles not only the problem of defence of th revolution, but also that of the creation of a popular consensus. But wha kind of consensus can there be when a good quarter, if not a third, o the city's inhabitants are sub-proletarians 'living off thin air' and open to any form of pressure? 'Just think,' another municipal leader said to us 'a revolutionary can be killed by a "lumpen" (Marx's "ragge proletarian") for ten, or perhaps even five, dollars!' The population of the capital also includes clerks and middle layers, who view events as struggle between 'white terror' and 'red terror' (as the response of self defence is so often called).

Our informant added: "The counter-revolutionaries have begun to se their sights higher. They no longer shoot only with pistols, but use cat and sub-machine guns. The situation would be terrible if it were not fo our defence committees, which were created by the masses themselve and have no legal status. Although the counter-revolutionaries at strong, they now carry through less than half their attempted actions. W

sactifice many of our methods.—One a day on average. Sometimes they be low for a day or two, and then kill, or try to kill, five or six of our comrades. We have lost 200 in a year, each one carefully chosen. That i what things are like. But now the kebele—or at any rate most of them—arm a position to defend themselves. The aim of the counter revolutionaries is to spread terror and paralyse the organization of the masses. But they have produced the opposite effect: whoever sees his friend killed joins the side of the revolution, if only to defend himself. Fo it could be his turn tomorrow if he stands aside from the course of events.' In this way, mass organization is born and grows in a country where revolution broke out spontaneously under the weight of unbearable evils. It develops in a situation characterized by war on several fronts; by almost imperceptible, but nevertheless very powerful, foreign pressures and demands; and by the lack of a guiding party.

Such a party is envisaged in the 'programme of national-democratic revolution', but it cannot be actualized around a discussion-table, whether real or figurative. Discussion—and the choices that should follow from it—could unite the various forces, but it could also divide them and arouse new contradictions. That has already happened in a number of cases. However, there is also a positive and encouraging aspect. One of the people we met told us: In comparison with the explosion of discontent that allowed the emperor to be overthrown, there is now greater awareness of political affairs. Belief in the success of the revolution is at a very high level, and correct leadership and understanding of the aspirations of the masses can bring victory closer. There is a danger that someone may launch an adventure, but I am convinced that we shall win through, even if we have to make a lot of sacrifices.'

Emilio Sarza Amadê

Interview with Pajetta

'A profound and arduous revolutionary process is unfolding in Ethiopia. In my opinion, nothing would be more absurd than to refuse to get to know it.' This is how comrade Gian Carlo Pajetta motivates the trip that took him, in the space of ten days, to Addis Ababa and Mogadishu—the two capitals of the war-troubled Horn of Africa. Was he then just interested in deepening his knowledge? In Italy, there has been much talk of PCI mediation and of Berlinguer's letters to the two heads of state: Mengistu Haile Mariam and Mohammed Siad Barre. 'We do not arrogate to ourselves diplomatic tasks', Pajetta replied. Nor do we have any authority to undertake diplomatic initiatives. But we consider ourselves friends of both sides, and we therefore wanted to make known to them our views concerning the dangers and harmful effects of a continuation of the conflict—not to mention the possibility that we might use the occasion to examine together the problems involved. These undeniably complex problems certainly cannot be solved by the tanks of any army. The war is already costing the blood of Africans who, on either side of the

mics, builtre in their national rights and in the independence and antiimperialist unity of Africa.'

Accompanied on his trip by Gianni Giadresco of the Central Committee of the PCI, Pajetta met the top leaders of both countries. In Addis Ababa, he had a long discussion with Dergue president, Mengistu Haile Mariam, and Major Berhanu Baye, the Dergue official responsible for international questions. In Mogadishu, he had similar talks with Ismail Ali Abukar, Assistant General Secretary of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP) and vice-president of the republic, and with Mohamed Aden, party secretary for ideological matters.

Let us begin with Ethiopia. I asked Pajetta whether the trip had allowed him to deepen his knowledge of the Ethiopian revolution. It is always unwise to say or think that you have understood everything after a trip lasting a few days. Nor is it possible, in the framework of an interview, to explain the nature of a revolution. However, I would like to mention some important points. The land has been distributed to the peasants, who now work with rifles on their shoulders. Addis Ababa has been divided into 289 "districts" or kebele, which are in some ways reminiscent of rudimentary soviets or the sections of the French Revolution. A people's militia has grown up alongside the army. The students all participated, and still participate, in the movement of national renewal and liberation-albeit with diverse positions, that sometimes stand in sharp contrast or even open conflict with one another. The workers have formed a large, country-wide trade-union organization. A co-ordinating committee of five Marxist groups is working towards the creation of a single party for the defence of the Ethiopian revolution. In my opinion, all this illustrates the importance of the process shaking Ethiopian society.'

Nevertheless, the process is a contradictory and disturbing one. Ethiopia is passing through a dramatic stage, as is shown by the recent execution of the Dergue vice-president, Atnafu Abate. I noticed that the Ethiopian rulers have no desire to play down the gravity of the situation, or its exacerbation in the last few weeks. The situation is difficult both withir the country and at the various fronts. But it is all the more serious and painful in that it involves a confrontation with popular forces (such a those in Entrea and the Ogaden) who lay claim to the ideals of nationa liberation and socialism. In any case, the most acute problem today is tha of nationality. I am referring to the seventeen-year-old armed indepen dence struggle in Eritrea and to the war in the Ogaden. This is ar altogether distinct question. We made this very clear during our talks and in general, it seemed to be understood that, without a resolution o this objective problem, no effective renewal would be possible. The ver Arab régimes that used to oppose the Eritrean movement may now b interested in encouraging it. But that does not detract from its characte as a national popular movement.'

And what about the struggle taking place in the Ogaden? In Addi-Ababa, they say that the guns in use around Harar and Dire Dawn as those of a regular army, not of guerrilla fighters. As we forcefull[®] stressed, however, this does not alter the fact that the inhabitants of the recognition of the autonomy and self-government of these inhabitants. But for us, as you well know, such a recognition is not the same as raising the question of border changes today. For that would spark off huge conflicts in every corner of the continent.'

Do these positions not risk endangering the positive relations we have long enjoyed with the Eritrean movement and with the Somalis? 'We shall continue to have relations with the Eritreans. Just before I left for Addis Ababa, I myself visited their representatives. Today they do not share our assessment of, or hopes for, the Ethiopian revolution. But I think it our internationalist duty to help in restoring contact between Eritreans and Ethiopians.' With the Somalis too, we have for a long time had friendly relations. 'Certainly. As you can see from the communiqué, both the Somalis and ourselves wished to stress that our mutual relations are still ones of fraternal collaboration and that they should be maintained and developed.'

Do you think that this friendship will stand the test of the dramatic situation now facing the Horn of Africa? 'We came back from Mogadishu convinced that we were still friends of the Somalis. We put forward our positions and listened to theirs. We found people who were open to reason—who were concerned both to defend positions they thought just and to take account of concrete realities. When the communiqué states that even positions which are not identical ought to allow joint work, it is not without meaning. The very letter in which Berlinguer explains our position to comrade Siad Barre also expresses our resolve that present events should not alter or diminish the weight attached to bilateral relations by the pci and the SRSP.'

What are the likely consequences of breaking off the Soviet-Somali treaty of friendship and co-operation? 'We certainly regretted this outcome, as did the Somalis themselves. But it is evident that, once the conflict had erupted, the Somalis could not retain Soviet military advisers. Still, diplomatic relations have not been broken, even though a polemic is now under way. It would be foolish to deny the dramatic character of the turn in events. But the important fact that the Soviet ambassador has not been changed seems to indicate that there is no wish to exacerbate the situation or make it irreparable.

Interviewer: Gnido Bimbi

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The Modes of Production Controversy

farxist writing on development and underdevelopment, which barely a decade go was largely confined to the shrill critiques of a few voices crying in the ilderness, seems well and truly now to have 'taken off'.* Indeed, the growth of its new (or rediscovered) paradigm has been such that there seems to be almost much variety of opinion and analysis within it as could be found among the ourgeois development theories that Marxists so trenchantly criticized. A few ars ago it seemed appropriate to sketch out the distinctive features of a Marxist erspective as such, in comparison with other approaches. Today the observer is fore likely to be struck by the controversies and debates going on between articipants who would probably all claim to be in some sense Marxists, but who opear deeply and perhaps increasingly divided over fundamental issues. We can ustrate this briefly by looking at a range of recent Marxist attempts to grapple ith what must be the most basic question for all such writers: namely, the proper taracterization of 'underdevelopment' itself. A few (following Marx himself) intinue radically to reject this problematic as such. Warren, for instance, argues

industrialization and the development of capitalism, precisely as we know these processes from the experience of 'developed' countries. They are route, even if the journey will be long and painful.

Marxists and Underdevelopment

Against, this, of course, the great bulk of recent Marxist writing takes its very point of departure the Third World's not being en route, or at le not on that route. But even here there is considerable variety. Still wi affinities (especially methodological) to the 'classical' view, there is t conception of underdevelopment as a transition blocked, a ('norma process incomplete. This I take to be the sense of Kay's dictum th capital created underdevelopment not because it exploited t underdeveloped world, but because it did not exploit it enough'-a fi which he attributes to the unduly prolonged dominance in the Thi World of merchant capital, unable as it is to revolutionize the mode production.⁵ Others go further: the 'blocked transition' becom 'peripheral capitalism'—a reality sus generis. For Amin, the 'norm development of capitalism (as studied, and formally stated, by Marx Capital) is but one variant—even if in some sense the 'true' one. This 'autocentric', based on a dynamic relationship between producer goo and consumer goods sectors (Marx's 'Departments 1 & 11'), and fuelled home market demand. The Third World, by contrast, has from t beginning been extraverted, externally oriented: here the key sectors a export production and import consumption, again dynamically relat but perversely so, and with no prospect of debouching into t 'autocentric' type.

^{*} This article will appear in John Clammer (ed.), The New Economic Anthropology, to published by Macmillan in 1978, and is reproduced here with thanks Earlier versions we presented to seminars in Leeds in April 1976, Binghamton in April 1977 and the 1 Development group in London in June 1977. I am grateful for these invitations, especia to Immanuel Wallerstein and his colleagues at Binghamton for a stimulating session whi put the paper into something like its present form, and to Doug McEachern in Leeds 1 critical comments which I have found very useful even when I have not used them. Nextly of them, however, will agree with what follows. Finally, thanks are due to John Clamm for his surpassing patience.

¹ For an attempt to view the relationship between Marxist and bourgeois development theory in terms of paradigms, see my 'From Rostow to Gunder Frank' Conflicti Paradigms in the Analysis of Underdevelopment', World Development Vol 1v, No. 3 (Mar 1976)

² This I essayed in 'Neo-Marxist Approaches to Development and Underdevelopmen Journal of Contimporary Assa, Vol. 111, No. 1 (1973), a shorter version (but with bibliograph is in E. de Kadt & G. Williams (eds.), Society and Development, London 1974.

This view of Marx is sketched briefly in my 'Neo-Marxist Approacher', op. cit, and length in an unpublished paper 'Karl Marx and Underdevelopment, the Ambiguo Dialectic' (1971).

⁴ Bill Warren, 'Impension and Capitalist Industrialization', NLR 81, September-Octob 1973.

Geoffrey Kay, Development and Under development: a Marxist Analysis, London 1975, p. x a chapter 5

Samir Amin, Accumulation on a World Scale, New York 1974, and Unoqual Developme Hassocks, Sussex 1976. A convenient summary of the key arguments is in "Theoretis Model of Capital Accumulation", Reserv of African Political Economy, No. 1 (1974).

For Frank, things are simpler: it is just capitalism.7 (In fact Frank's argument is often subtler in detail than his more programmatic statements suggest: even so, the stark simplicity of the latter played a crucial role in the development of a paradigm which enabled them to be transcended.) Capitalism is constituted by a uniform hierarchy of metropolis and satellite, expropriating and appropriating surplus upwards and outwards, nationally and internationally. In particular, as everyone knows, Frank will have none of any suggestion that the penetration of capitalism is in some sense partial or incomplete, so that underdevelopment should be understood as a form of combination of capitalism with something else. Hence his rejection equally of, on the one hand, conventional theories of 'dualism' and, on the other, the characteristic idea of Latin American Communist Parties (and others) that there are significant remnants of feudalism in their societies. It is important to understand Frank's implacability on this point. Aside from the deleterious political consequences of what he regards as false conceptions, his stress on the 'development of underdevelopment' as an active process of appendagization and distortion entails absolute hostility to the idea of any currently existing social forms being seen as 'traditional' and hence extrinsic to this process. For Frank, as more recently for Wallerstein, there is but a single 'world-system'; and it is capitalist through and through.

Going beyond the enumeration of different Marxist characterizations of underdevelopment, it is possible to sketch out a more systematic account of changing emphases and foci within this paradigm. The resurgence of interest in Marxist approaches in the late 1960s was principally mediated via the Latin American 'dependency' school, and Frank in particular. Subsequent evolution and criticism has largely proceeded in terms of reappraising the limitations of the 'dependency' perspective. Three lines of criticism may be distinguished. First, there was a problem of scope or scale. Dependency' might well suggest a macro-framework, but it did not easily manage the shift from general statements to micro-fieldwork.10 Concepts like Frank's 'metropolis' and 'satellite' were in their own way scarcely less elusive or easier to pin down than Rostow's 'stages of growth'. An operationalizing problem, then, was early detected; and social scientists attracted by the 'dependency' perspective often found that in practice they could use it as little more than a charter. Almost at once other approaches began to be sought, both for the detailed study of the local level and for understanding its linkages with the wider society.

Immanuel Wallerstein, The Madern World System, New York 1974; also numerous recent articles

19 This point is made by the editors of a valuable recent collection: I Oxasi, Λ. Barnett and D. Booth (eds.), Beyond the Society of Divisionment, London 1975, p. 2.

⁷ A. G. Frank, Capitalism and Underdovelepment in Latin America, New York 1967; Latin America. Underdovelepment or Revolution, New York 1969

See the interesting analysis by Ian Roxborough, 'Dependency Theory in the Sociology of Development: Some Theoretical Problems', West African Journal of Sociology and Political Science, Vol. 1, No. 2 (January 1976)

Two such candidates have been theories of 'brokerage' on the one hand, and 'modes of production' on the other.¹¹

In the second place, the operational difficulty was interpreted in some quarters as implying that the dependency approach was not merely too broad in scope, but downright confused and contradictory: it lacked conceptual rigour.12 This objection, unlike the former, was principally a Marxist response, and it took various forms. At worst, it could be a palaeo-Marxist reaction to unfamiliar and hence threatening ideas, especially those of dubious intellectual parentage (and it may well be true that 'dependency' theory is the unhappy progeny of vaguely Marxist ideas coupled with Latin American bourgeois nationalism). Thus there were and are those whose response is to reiterate mechanically as Marxist dogma such themes as 'stages of development' (even though, as Amin has observed, this utterly Rostovian idea has nothing to do with the dialectics of Marx¹³). More originally, if not always much more usefully, others under the banner of Althusser have attempted rigorously to theorize in what they regard as properly Marxist terms the phenomenon loosely described as 'underdevelopment'. As with the first group of critics of 'dependency', in practice this has led to a focusing of attention on modes of production.

The 'Articulation' of Modes of Production

It is this concern with modes of production, and what has recently been often called their 'articulation', which constitutes the third aspect of the attempt to advance beyond 'dependency'—and indeed forms the main subject of this article. The essential conceptual differences between the 'dependency' and the recently fashionable 'mode of production' approaches can be seen in the well-known critique of Frank by Laclau.14 Although the terminology may not be the same (in particular, Laclau does not use the word 'articulation' in the sense that is discussed here), the key distinctions and debates are all there. Against Frank's ubiquitous and homogeneous 'capitalism', Laclau posits not a dualistic model (he to speaks of an 'indissoluble unity'), but a structured and differentiated whole, the 'economic system'—others will call it 'social formation' which is indeed capitalistic. However, this level of operation is constituted by market relations: for Leclau, what is more important are relations of production, and on this basis he maintains that there were and are substantial elements of feudalism in Latin America. Yet-and here i the twist—these exist not exogenous to capitalism, nor as pockets o decline, but as an intrinsic and structured part of a wider system. In Lati-America, as in the 'second serfdom' of Eastern Europe, it was precisely

ii 'Brokerage' theory in this connection is expounded by Norman Long, 'Structun dependency, modes of production and economic brokerage in rural Peru', in Oxaal et a (eds), op cit it seems to me, however, that this approach is vulnerable to what Hami Alavi in a penetrating critique calls methodological individualism see his 'Peasant Classiand Primordial Loyalnes', Journal of Poetent Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1.

¹³ A recent special issue of *The Intergent Society in* (Vol. vii, No. 2, Spring 1977) is explicit organized around this perspective. However, a histy and total rejection of 'dependency'; favour of 'modes of production' does not necessarily constitute progress.

¹³ Amin, Accumulation, op cit., Vol. 2, p 590.
14 Ernesto Laclau, 'Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America', NLR 67 (May-June 197) now included in Politics and Ideology in Marxitt Theory, London 1977

the impact of an external market which—so far from dissolving—intensified or even invented feudal and other precapitalist modes of production.

We thus have the paradox of capitalism's relation to other modes of production being conceived not (or not simply) as succession or evolution (as in the 'stages' model: primitive communal, ancient, slave, feudal, capitalist modes of production, with the 'Asiatic' awkwardly at a tangent). Nor yet as some kind of dialectical transcendence and dissolution (one could debate whether internal or external, interstitial or marginal, as in the classic Dobb-Sweezy polemic on feudalism and capitalism¹⁵). Nor even as a transition (unless prolonged to the point of analytical vacuity). On the contrary, this capitalism neither evolves mechanically from what precedes it, nor does it necessarily dissolve it. Indeed, so far from banishing pre-capitalist forms, it not only coexists with them but buttresses them, and even on occasions devilishly conjures them up exnibilo.

Various writers, working over a wide range of sources of material and levels of analysis, have produced formulations which at least expresseven if they do not comprehend—the contradictory nature of these processes. Thus Meillassoux describes pre-capitalist forms as 'being undermined and perpetuated at the same time. 16 Poulantzas points to 'complex forms of dissolution and conservation'.17 Bettelheim also talks of 'conservation/dissolution', adding that 'all reality is contradictory'.18 Much the most popular, however, especially in the last two or three years, has been the notion of 'articulation' of modes of production, whose origins and evolution are discussed in the next section below. It will be argued that this particular word serves as a useful focus for a more general discussion of recent tendencies in Marxist development theoryespecially the 'mode of production' literature—since the works which use it raise (sometimes unwittingly) many fundamental conceptual questions. At the same time, the term itself is far from unproblematic. It appears to have been enthusiastically taken up with little or no thought of its implications, even by those who boast of the rigour with which they 'think' all their concepts.

Finally, discussion of such terms should not be seen as a sterile exercise in intellectualizing, the latter-day counterpart of mediaeval discussions on how many angels could stand on the head of the pin. For the theoretical issues raised by the term 'articulation' are of very real importance, not least politically. This assertion involves a battle on two fronts: against the attempted Parsonianization of Marxism into 'grand theory' which openly

¹⁶ Claude Meillassoux, 'From Reproduction to Production', Economy and Society, Vol 1, No. 1 (February 1972), p. 103.

¹⁸ Now reprinted with additional contributions in Rodney Hilton (ed.), The Transition from Fendalism to Capitalism, London 1976

¹⁷ Nicos Poulantzas, 'Internationalization of capitalist relations and the nation state', Economy and Society, Vol. III, No. 2 (May 1974), p. 148

¹⁸ Charles Bettelheim, "Theoretical Comments", Appendix I in Arghirl Emmanuel, Unequal Exchange, London 1972, pp. 297—8; and (with Paul Sweezy) On the Transition to Socialism, New York 1971, p. 18

boasts its lack of connection with the real world; and at the same tin against those who (partly in justified exasperation with the forme eschew theory in general and 'modes of production' (let alone the articulation) in particular—preferring to treat questions such as differe patterns of 'labour supply' in the Americas ('slavery', 'feudalism') individual and empirical questions of historical contingency. Just as the American sociology of the 1950s so well criticized by Wright Mills so too in contemporary Marxism there are unfortunate tendenci towards a symbiotic (articulated?) 'grand theory' and 'abstracti empiricism', each despising but nonetheless mirroring the defects of the other.

Both these extremes must be rejected. Theory is both necessary ar useful. As for political relevance, one need not embrace the ethnicentrism and intellectual theocratism which avers that Hanoi would (should) have humbly picked up every pearl from Theoretical Practice before taking any action, in order to argue that theory does have real consequences. Suffice it to note that Frank's main theoretical adversaries, Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America, were men such as Mi Noiff and other advisers to the then Chilean presidential candidate Salvador Allende; and that 'abstract' debates on the presence of otherwise of 'feudalism' in Chile had a direct bearing on class alliance (e.g. the existence or otherwise of a 'national bourgeoisie'), which in the profoundly influenced the policies of the Unidad Popular government. The fate of Chile surely shows that, like bad medicine, bad theory can ki It is therefore worth talking about.

Origins: Althusser and Balibar

The recent concern with modes of production in the sociology development derives from the originators of what is sometimes terms the 'new economic anthropology': namely, such French writers Meillassoux, Godelier, Terray, Dupré, and above all Rey. As Clamm has noted, however, most of this group are not simply 'Marxist'. Mo specifically, they 'draw [their] inspiration from Marx largely by way Althusser, [as illustrated by] the use of Althusserian language, aspects his methodology... interest in Marx's mature works (and in particul Capital) as opposed to his earlier ones, and the extension of certa Althusserian preoccupations (and in particular that of modes production)'. 25

Much of this applies precisely to the term 'articulation', to which we no direct our attention. Its use in Marxist literature does not appear a predate Althusser, who may therefore be credited with having invente

¹⁶ See, for example, Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, Procapitalist Modes of Products. London 1975.

I take this to be the position of Harry Magdoff; it is probably widely held by the Marxists who find 'modes of production' baffling and insubstantial.

E C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, New York 1959.

³⁸ See, for example, John Taylor, 'Neo-Marxiam and Underdevelopment' a sociologic phantasy', Journal of Contrasporary Aria, Vol. 1v, No. 1 (1974).

⁵⁵ John Clammer, 'Economic Anthropology and the Sociology of Development', in Ox et. al. (eds.), op crt., p. 213.

Althusser and even more by Balibar, the word does not rate an entry in their English translator's generally useful glossary—which indeed itself employs the term 'articulation' in the course of defining other technical terms (e.g. 'combination', 'contradiction' and 'mode of production'). 'Articulation' is thus overdue for some semantic attention. Post, perhaps the only writer to have reflected on the term while using it, notes that in both English and French to 'articulate' has at least two different levels of meaning: 1. 'join together'; 2. 'give expression to'. He adds that although Althusser and his colleagues only systematically use it in the first sense, in fact the double meaning precisely expresses the relation between the economic base and the other 'instances' (e.g. the political): not only are they linked together, but the political gives expression to the economic.

It is certainly true that Althusser and Balibar's principal usage of 'articulation' is for the linking of different 'instances' or levels. 'Contradiction', for example, is defined 25 '2 term for the articulation of 2 practice into the complex whole of the social formation'. Similarly, 'mode of production' is 'a complex structure, doubly articulated by the productive forces connexion and the relations of production connexion'. Yet there is evidence that a specific kind of linkage is meant, whose character is not so much 'expressiveness' (indeed this is expressly disavowed) as effectivity. To understand this we must bring in another language. Althusser might well deny that he invented 'articulation' as a Marxist concept, for he uses it as an equivalent of Marx's gliederung (also translated as 'articulated combination' and 'articulated hierarchy').* It derives etymologically from the Latin artus—a limb, just as Mara's term derives from the German word for a limb, glad. The image is thus anatomical, suggesting the structured linkage of the limbs of the body. It may be open to debate how closely Marx intended to apply this metaphor; other translators render gliederung variously as 'organic connection' or simply 'organization' or even 'structure' or 'order'." Althusser, however, apparently means it quite exactly, for more than once he couples it with other terms for the linkage of levels, whose connotation is different but whose sense is again anatomical. Different 'times', for instance, are said to be 'harmonized' by relations of 'articulation', 'dislocation', 'displacement' and 'torsion'. 30

Without further pursuing the exegesis of Althusserian imagery, we may

M Louis Althusser and Erienne Balibar, Resding Capital, London 1970, with a glossary by the translator, Ben Brewster

^{*}Ken Post, Arus, Ye Starvelings: the Jamaican labour rebellion of 1938 and its aftermath, New York (forthcoming), p. 27 of Ms. (I am grateful for the chance to look at this prior to publication.)

Reading Capital, pp 311 and 317 Although strictly speaking these are quotations from Brewster's exegents of Althusser rather than from Althusser himself, this convenient procedure seems justified by Brewster's having received the master's imprimator (p. 323).

Thid. pp 178 and 313.

^{**} Ibid pp. 48 and 98

³⁰ David McLellan, Marx's Grandrisss, London 1971, translates Ghodering variously as 'organization' (p. 39) or 'organic connection' (p. 42). Martin Nicolaus, Grandrisss, London 1973, simply gives 'structure' (p. 105) and 'order' (p. 108).

³⁰ Reading Capital, pp. 100, 108.

relations of linkage and effectivity between different levels of all sorts things. But for our present purpose we must also note a startlu 'absence': nowhere, it seems, do Althusser or Balibar ever speak of t articulation of modes of production in the sense currently popular. It is not th they do not envisage such a problematic, but they always use other terr to define it. Balibar in particular, who in most contexts is even more proto talk about 'articulation' than is Althusser, notes as 'an objectiomission from historical materialism' that 'Capital, which expounds t abstract theory of the capitalist mode of production, does not undertato analyse concrete social formations which generally contain seen different modes of production, whose laws of coexistence and hierarchy mu therefore be studied.' Or again: '[Economic history], dealing as it do with concrete-real social formations, always studies economic structur dominated by sweral modes of production. It therefore has nothing to a with the "tendencies" determined by the theoretical analysis of isolati modes of production, but with the compounded effects of sever tendencies. This considerable problem lies outside the field of the prese analysis.'41 And finally, at the very end of Elements for a Theory Transition': 'Periods of transition are therefore characterized by tl coexistence of several modes of production . . . The problems of tl transition from one mode of production to another are problems of more general synchrony than that of the mode of production itse englobing several systems and their relations (according to Lenin, at tl beginning of the period of the transition to socialism in Russia, there we up to five coexisting modes of production, unevenly developed ar organized in a hierarchy in dominance). The analysis of these relations domination is only outlined by Marx, and it constitutes one of the ma fields open for investigation by his successors."32

These somewhat fragmentary comments suggest at least two differen conceptualizations of the linking of different modes of production neither of which is exactly 'articulation'. In themselves, terms lil 'coexistence' and 'tendencies' (especially in the context of Balibar suggestive treatment of historical 'time's imply if anything a sort i apartheid of modes of production, developing separately and unequallyeven if their consequences necessarily interact. By contrast, hierarchy dominance' and 'relations of domination' do suggest a 'vertical' supe and sub-ordination rather than mere 'horizontal' juxtaposition. Ye Balibar does not call this 'articulation', perhaps because this would be a unwarranted extension of his normal usage: after all, relations betwee two modes of production are scarcely the sort of thing that could be said to b characterized by 'effectivity' (let alone Post's 'expressiveness'). So th notion of 'articulation of modes of production' is not found in Althusse or Balibar. Its recent popularity must therefore be traced mor proximately, in the work of a writer who while clearly influenced b Althusser has made important contributions of his own: Pierre-Philipt Rey.

²¹ Ibid p 207, n. 5 ('omission' and 'several' are emphasized in the original, 'coexistence as hierarchy'—emphasis added), and p 300, n 24.

[™] Ibid pp. 307—8. (The reference to Lenin is unsourced.)

³³ Ibid. pp. 300-1; see also our discussion below.

It is regrettable that Rey's books have not been translated into English: as we shall see, they are often theoretically in advance of some who have picked up the idea of 'articulation' with more enthusiasm than subtlety Fortunately Bradby has provided a useful summary résumé, so it i sufficient here to focus on points of commendation and criticism. If Just a Althusser introduced the concept of 'articulation' without defining it, so Rey devoted an entire book to using it in a sense which (as we have seen is different from Althusser's, again without explicitly acknowledging this shift of usage. Nonetheless, it is arguable that Rey's work represents no only the earliest, but still the most effective and thorough-going attemp to 'think' the articulation of modes of production.

As the very title of his book Las Alliances de Classes suggests, Rey comes to discuss modes of production in order to illuminate political questions This is so in two distinct senses. First, Rey firmly believes that the test of theory is in its practical political usefulness: that is what theory is for, and furthermore, that is the context whence it must derive if it is to be useful Of course, all Marxists pay lip-service to this. But Rev in the second and shorter essay in the volume, 'Matérialisme historique et luttes des classes' elaborates an acid critique of intellectualizing for its own sake, and indeed of any belief in the primacy of intellectuals. Not even Althusser, or Lenir himself, escape.37 (Not that Rey entirely avoids a rather fey self-criticism, but in general his tone is refreshing.) Secondly, and more analytically, his focus is on modes of production in order to understand the material basis and workings of class alliances. In contrast, much subsequent work has tended to treat modes of production as entities occupying the totality of explanatory space—either omitting the political level (let alone others, such as the juridical or ideological), or relegating them to a minor and preordained place.36 The inevitable result is not only economism but reification. It is already one level of abstraction to have 'classes' (rather than 'people') as the subject of history; but to endow so conceptual an entity as 'mode of production' with this role is idealism indeed. As modes of production are not the subject of history, so neither should they be the subject of sentences. Rey might still have enough of the Trager (support)

* B. Bradby, 'The Destruction of Natural Economy', Economy and Society, Vol. IV, No. 2 (May 1975).

** Ibid. pp. 171–219, and especially pp. 177ff.

M Pierre-Philippe Rey, Colonialisms, non-colonialisms, at transition an capitalisms Paris 1971; and especially Los Albanes de Classes, Paris 1973. Two articles by Rey whose focus is different but which are available in English are: "The Lineage Mode of Production', Critique of Anthropology, No. 3 (Spring 1973); and (with G Dupré) Reflections on the pertinence of a theory of the history of exchange', Economy and Society, Vol. II, No. 2, (May 1973).

³⁶ 'Sur l'articulation des modes de production', the long paper which constitutes over three quarters of Les Albanes, op. cit., was published in mimeographed form in 1969 and had considerable circulation as such, before appearing in book form four years later. See pp. 167, 171.

This is less a critique of particular texts than a general impression of, for example, two years of the British Sociological Association's 'Development Group' Workshops on topics related to modes of production.

Substantively, Rey's concept of articulation also has virtues not always found in the literature which it unleashed. For one thing, it is not a static state but a process in time: chapter two of Alliances is entitled Le procès d'articulation'. As such, it is essentially a reformulation and specification of the problematic hitherto known as the transition to capitalism. As we shall see, the core of Rey's argument is to try to develop a single analytical framework that will comprehend both the European transition from feudalism to capitalism and also the latter's articulation with other precapitalist modes. Moreover, to emphasize the diachronic aspect of articulation, in Rey's account it has its own periodization. Whereas much other work is content to talk of articulation, but leave unspecified any internal content or dynamic, Rey distinguishes three stages of articulation: 1. an initial link in the sphere of exchange, where interaction with capitalism reinforces the pre-capitalist mode; 2. capitalism 'takes root', subordinating the pre-capitalist mode but still making use of it; 3. (not yet reached in the Third World) the total disappearance of the precapitalist mode, even in agriculture.40

Such a periodization may be controversial, and will be discussed further. But it does meet in principle a particular objection voiced by critics of the notion of 'articulation': namely, that by positing a static and unspecified linkage it trespasses upon and indeed negates the concept of contradiction, whose Marxist pedigree is certainly better attested. But for Rey (as later for Post) there is no conflict between these two concepts. If anything, 'articulation' specifies the nature of the contradiction. As Rey himself puts it, the idea is of 'the articulation of two modes of production, one of which establishes its domination over the other . , . not as a static given, but as a process, that is to say a combat between the two modes of production, with the confrontations and alliances which such a combat implies: confrontations and alliances essentially between the classes which these modes of production define'. 41

Significantly, the context from which this quotation is taken not only states Rey's own problematic, but represents what (in his view) Marx himself 'almost thought'. This gives an insight into Rey's general strategy, which can now be discussed more closely. For Rey, 'the theory, or rather the elements of a theory, of [the] blocking of the "capitalist revolution" in the underdeveloped countries, are to be found in Capital. But one must go and look for them where they are, which is not in the all too rare texts devoted to the actual underdeveloped countries, but in the texts devoted to the developed countries themselves." This whole

²⁶ For a critique of this conception of class as espoused by Poulantzas, see G. van Benthem van den Bergh, "The interconnection between processes of state and class formation: problems of conceptualization', Institute of Social Studies (The Hague) Occasional Paper No. 52, August 1975 The characterization (p. 5) of Poulantzas's position as 'structural functionalism clothed in Marxist concepts' seems to me correct: For Poulantzas as for Parsons, everything falls nicely into place' (ibid.).

⁴⁰ Les Allacares, pp. 82-7.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 15 (emphasis in the original). All translations from Rey are my own, I am grateful for advice from P. Thody on several points, but am of course responsible for any errors that remain

[■] Ibid pp. 14-15

an impression would be mistaken. For one thing, Rey rightly gives little weight to Marx's 'texts [on] the actual underdeveloped countries', which besides being 'all too rare' are admittedly lightweight. They were written for newspapers, for money, at speed, and in part with the polemical intention of shocking American readers out of their arcadian pastoralism by stressing the 'revolutionary' role of British capitalism in India. Instead, then, Rey looks at what Marx had to say on the transition from feudalism to capitalism—and even here he is not unduly pious. Indeed, it is a key point in his argument that Marx fundamentally misunderstood the nature of ground rent, seeing it as an integral part of the capitalist mode of production when, in fact, it was precisely a sign of the articulation between feudalism and capitalism. (Needless to say, such rash impiety has brought stern rebukes from the high priests.)

Rey's Project

But what, in any case, is the logic of devoting the greater part of a book on articulation in general to the particular case of feudalism/capitalism, when the Third World's problem is precisely its failure to repeat the European trajectory? Here we must distinguish different levels of analysis. Rey is trying on one plane to show the differences between Europe and the rest (or rather, between feudalism and the rest: both Lenin and Luxemburg are chided—and Emmanuel could have been added—for confusing these two levels of analysis, countries vs. modes of production). At the same time, his strategy for so doing is to seek a meta-framework which will explain both (or all) varieties of articulation. His motive might thus be economy of explanation in general; but more specifically, he seeks to preserve the coherence of Marxism via what might be called the 'homoficence' of capitalism. 47

We can better appreciate Rey's endeavour, and perceive the traps into which he is trying not to fall, by recalling some of the current notions of 'underdevelopment' referred to at the outset above. Two in particular will serve our purpose: those of Kay and Amin. Clearly, on the face of it, capitalism has not had the same effects in the 'underdeveloped' as in the 'developed' countries; it is indeed on this basis that we make the distinction. How do we explain this? Already there loom pitfalls of reification and voluntarism. Much debate in this field might be caricatured without undue injustice as being about 'What Capitalism Did'; or rather 'What Capitalism Did Not' (did in some places, did not in others); or 'What Capitalism Almost Did, But Not Quite' (a failure of the will?); or, with subtler dialectic, 'What Capitalism Did—And Then Again Did Not'.

44 Ibid , p. 15, and chapter 1, passes

⁴ Ibid.; also p 83, n 25

[#] Hindess and Hirst, op. cit., pp. 295-6. Not only is their critique of Rey on this point misplaced, but it is remarkable that these authors nowhere discuss his central idea of articulation of modes of production.

⁴ Les Allhances, pp 139, 154

[&]quot;Homoficence' literally, 'doing the same thing' or 'having the same effect'—what Rey elsewhere calls the 'parallelism of action' of capital (p. 89). Neologism seems unavoidable in order to render accurately a conception which is central to the ensuing discussion.

that 'capital created underdevelopment, not because it exploited the underdeveloped world, but because it did not exploit it enough'. For Rey, this would be inadmissible voluntarism, contradicted by '[the] fundamental law of capitalism, as true today as on the day when Marx discovered it: capitalism has as its final goal the destruction at every point on the globe of antecedent modes of production and relations of production, in order to substitute for them its own mode of production and its own relations of production.'48 If it were otherwise, he sardonically suggests, we should have to coin the slogan: 'Capitalists' Invest in Africa or Asia! Extort surplus value from blacks, from yellows, from reds at the same rate you extort it from whites!" But capitalism needs no such exhortation: No one regrets more than the big bourgeoisie that the Africans, the Indians, the South Americans do not come forward—or only come so little—to sell "freely" their labour power. '50 For Rey, capitalism's 'goodwill' (or rather ill will; or let us just say, its logu) is a constant. What is variable, therefore, must be the other half of the articulation, viz. the pre-capitalist modes of production. This is indeed the essence of Rey's argument. Whereas feudalism acted as at integument, a cocoon for embryonic capitalism, other pre-capitalis modes of production are fiercely resistant to it; so much so that the resistance invariably for Rey must be broken in the first instance b violence.

The role of violence in Rey's argument will be considered below. Bu what is true of Kay's implicit voluntarism also applies to a formulation such as Amin's 'peripheral capitalism'. As Roxborough has argued in a important article, It is not clear what is implied in the claim that there is specific kind of capitalism in the peripheral countries. Is it the case the peripheral dependent capitalism is a mode of production sai generis, with its own laws of motion? If not, why does it apparently not obey the law of motion of the capitalism that we know?'51 It is this kind of difficultyprofusion of entities, whose qualities probably in the end can only b distinguished tautologously ('they are different, because they as different')—that Rey aims to avoid. As he concludes: 'Let us sto reproaching capitalism with the one crime which it has not committee which it could not think of committing; constrained as it is by its ow laws of constantly expanding the scale of its reproduction.'52 I trust th the general thrust of Rey's position is now fairly clear. He is 'orthodox' looking in the first instance to Marx (though not in the superficial obvious places) for his method. He is also orthodox in his concept of 'homoficent' and unitary capitalism, which is always working towards t) same goal and in the very long run would reach it. (In practice it will no as the socialist revolution will supervene well before capitalism b attained ubiquity, according to Rey. But to discuss that would ! beyond the scope of this article.)

⁴ Les Alberres, p. 10.

[#] Ibid., p it.

[■] Ibid., p. 13.

¹¹ Roxborough, op cat., pp. 119-20.

the Alliences, p. 16

¹³ Ibid., p 22.

insight, as he summarizes it, is that 'Capitalism can never immediately and totally eliminate the preceding modes of production, nor above all the relations of exploitation which characterize these modes of production. On the contrary, during an entire period it must reinforce these relation of exploitation, since it is only this development which permits its own provisioning with goods coming from these modes of production, or with men driven from these modes of production and therefore compelled to sell their labour power to capitalism in order to survive. Two points arise here. First, this is a general statement applying to both feudalism and other pre-capitalist modes in their articulation with capitalism. Yet in most other respects the case of feudalism is held by Rey to be very different from all others. Secondly, it reminds us that articulation is not an ethereal intellectual construct, but is about very concrete things: labour supplies and raw materials. Both points need elaboration.

In what respects then does Rey generalize about all articulations, and in what does he distinguish feudalism/capitalism as thi generis? At one level, as we have shown, he is conserved to preserve the analytical 'homoficence' of capitalism. Thus Rosa Luxemburg is given credit for 'revealing the parallelism of the action of capital, on the one hand at its birth in feudal societies, and on the other hand subsequently in the course of its installation in other types of society'. We may note in passing that 1. Rey does reify somewhat, since here capital not only 'acts', but gets born; 2. the distinction between 'birth' and 'installation' may be a considerable hostage to fortune, as we shall see.) So 'capital' does not change: variety of articulation therefore implies variety of pre-capitalist modes of production.

The Stages of Articulation

However, Rey takes the generalization further than this. Both with feudalism and with other modes, articulation is periodized, and in a parallel way. The stages were presented earlier in summary form, but should now be spelled out. At first, the 'traditional' mode remains dominant. Capitalism gets raw materials from it, but in the pre-capitalist social formation this exchange not only does not promote capitalist relations of production, but rather reinforces the pre-capitalist mode. As Bradby puts it, 'the process of capitalist reproduction only implies the expansion of capitalist relations if it is taking place in a social formation where capitalism is already dominant.' Thus in West African lineage societies the original trading of slaves and goods reinforced the existing modes. Similarly (to summarize a much more complex argument), early European capitalism could only secure both agricultural supplies and a labour force by an alliance with the feudal aristocracy which for a long period was beneficial to both parties.

In the second stage the balance of forces in the alliance changes, so that

[₩] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

[#] Ibid., p. 89.

⁸⁴ Bradby, op. cit., p. 147; cf. also Les Albances, p. 159.

'taken root' and become dominant. Henceforth, the 'other modes now exist "on the basis" of capitalism and are modified accordingly'. To Capitalism gets the upper hand now, so this if anything is the stage of transition; but its character even in Rey's account seems more heterogeneous than was the first stage. In the transition from feudalism to capitalism, peasant agriculture and handicrafts are first partially then completely transformed and eliminated respectively, and a labour force is created. These processes may occur with other modes, but as a rule less completely. The 'break with the land' in particular is often only partial, and in Africa especially it is seasonal; conversely, capital is slower to penetrate agriculture. (Admittedly this last is for Rey only fully completed in the third stage, as is capitalism's ability to ensure its own labour supply; but the Third World has yet to enter stage three, which indeed has only been entirely reached in the USA.)

So much for the supposed similarities; but the differences are also considerable. Rey admits that 'capitalism only expanded rapidly in those places where it was protected in its youth by feudalism'. 56 It is a revealing shorthand to summarize the feudalism/capitalism articulation as 'protective'; no other articulation could conceivably be so characterized. On the contrary, all other pre-capitalist modes are fiercely resistant to the spread of capitalist relations; or, more concretely, an alliance of capitalist and pre-capitalist ruling classes is not possible. The unity of 'natural economy' has therefore to be smashed by extra-economic means. For Rey, violence is a necessary component of all articulations except that with feudalism; as such, it apparently constitutes an extra 'stage' (which has no counterpart in feudalism) between the first and second stages just described: 'How then can capitalism "take root" in such social formations [i.e. those in which capitalism is not "born from the self destruction of previous relations of production"? It can only do so thanks to the implanting of transitional modes of production, which will be born in the womb of the colonized social formation and will dissolve themselves when the moment comes to give way to capitalism.' This artificial insemination, if you like, is precisely the function of the colonia period (for Rey says that 'Stage Two' in the Third World corresponds to the present phase of mo-colonialism). As such, colonialism (i.e. direc political domination) does not make economic sense in isolation—pac Lenin-but rather, in Bradby's summary of Rey, 'as a necessary stage is the transition to economic imperialism. For instance, the hecatomic caused by the French in the building of the Congo-Ocean railway from 1925 to 1935 was an irrational technical choice only comprehensible against the background of the previous colonial "labour problem". Te years of forced labour, and a death for every sleeper laid, solved the problem admirably—the habit of wage labour was inculcated and the wives of the labourers back in the villages were forced into sellin, agricultural commodities in order for that labour force to be fed."00

⁸⁷ Bradby, op. cit., p. 147.

Les Allsences, p. 11 (emphasis added).

[▶] Ibid . p. 119

Bridby, op. cit, p 146; cf Les Albances, pp. 135-6

Evidently, Rey's generalized statements about articulations per se at pretty formal, even formalistic: the substantive differences are much more striking. But forms aside, let us look for a moment at the very real content of these various articulations. One of Rey's virtues is that he does at least bring articulation down to earth by specifying its content-unlike some recent writing, for which it seems to be a ghostly pas de deax performed by modes of production apparently conceived as Platonic 'ideas'. Moreover, this leads him to devote a useful chapter to 'Theories of Imperialism' and thus at least attempt to insert his theoretical innovations into earlier debates and concepts: he discusses the ideas of Marx, Lenin, Luxemburg and Bauer. In brief, Rey's periodization of stages of articulation is rooted in capitalism's increasing (and eventually total) ability to look after itself. At first, however, 'the capitalist mode of production only finds a labour force and agricultural provisions thanks to the action of another ruling class'; in cases other than feudalism, we might generalize 'agricultural provisions' to raw materials. Later, capitalism begins to be able to ensure reproduction of its own labour supply, even if in the 'Third World' this process remains for long incomplete. It is still slower to enter agriculture directly, and perhaps only does so completely in Stage Three. As for raw materials generally, Rey argues that whereas in its countries of origin capitalism 'had already taken root sufficiently at the beginning of the industrial period to destroy the old modes of production and substitute itself for them in the production of its means of production', it is only in the era of finance capital that 'a new leap can be accomplished: capitalism can take root in new social formations'—thereby ensuring that 'the production of all its means of production in no matter what social formation becomes possible'.53

The Role of Violence

The general thrust of Rey's arguments has now been outlined; what follows will be critique. For though Rey's is not only the first but also still the best treatment of the idea of articulation, it nonetheless has difficulties, some of which are serious. One problem concerns the role of violence in Rey's schema, which makes him, as it were, the Frantz Fanon of the 'modes of production' literature. As with Fanon, critics may doubt whether what is certainly a widespread feature of the historical record is yet logically necessary. For, as Bradby notes, there are numerous cases 'where absolutely no extra-economic force has been used to expel the country population, but where capital is embarrassed by an all-too-great potential labour force'.64 Doctrinally, Bradby reformulates Rey's argument by suggesting that 'value analysis' (à la Marx) of the exchange of equivalents in the generation of surplus-value by capital abolishes the alleged 'gap between the external contact and the internal development of capitalism', to bridge which Rey posited the need for violence.45 One might speculate that maybe Rey's experience in Congo (Brazzaville), like

⁴¹ Les Alhences, chapter 4.

Bradby, op cat., p 147

^{**} Les Alhences, pp 137, 138.

H Bradby, op cat., p 151

[#] Ibid., p 150

Fanon's in Algeria, led him to elevate a common contingency to the status of an inexorable law—whereas in reality violence in this sense can only be an empirical question.

However, Bradby's patching-up of Rey's argument on this point may cause it to tear elsewhere. If violence is not essential to the argument, then why is the articulation of capitalism with all other modes of production except feudalism so prolonged and problematic? Rey himself seems confused. Some (not Rey) might prefer to characterize normal transitions (where labour pains, while far from negligible, are at least not indefinitely prolonged) as, precisely, transitions, and to reserve 'articulation' for cases where—as apparently in the Third World—it sometimes seems unlikely that there will be a 'birth' at all.65 For Rey, as we have seen, both of these cases are dubbed 'articulations'. Yet the latter still does not proceed smoothly, so Rey has to insert an additional stage (violence, formal colonialism, and vague talk of 'transitional modes of production') in order, as it were, to preserve the distinction at a higher level to articulate the articulations. What then if violence is taken out of the argument? The prospect looms of an infinite regress of articulations of articulations of—and the 'parallelism of the action of capital', which Rev is at such pains to preserve, looks shaky.

Pursuing this last point further, there are other respects in which Rey's argument at times appears self-contradictory. His opposition to voluntarist conceptions of capitalism has already been illustrated, and his insistence on what I have called its 'homoficence'. Yet it seems he is prepared to make at least one exception, and allow for a willed 'go-slow' of the expansion of capitalism, in cases where the bourgeoisie fears that too fast a drive will push the peasants into an alliance with the workers and precipitate the socialist revolution. His example is his native France, between 1871 and 1958 [57] To which one might retort: 1. if in France, why not elsewhere? 2. if for one reason, why not for others?; 3. that in any case the argument shifts inadmissably from the blind logic of capitalism to the conscious policies of capitalists—a distinction which, along with others, will be elaborated below. On all counts, 'homoficence' looks shakier still.

Then there is the vexed question of capitalism 'taking root'. Often as Rey uses the phrase, it rarely if ever loses those tentative quotation marks—although he will happily have capitalism doing other metaphorical things (like being born) with no hint of an inverted comma. Yet the notion is more than tentative: it is almost certainly circular. Especially in the Third World, how do we know when the second and crucial stage of articulation has been reached? Appearances will tell us little. The mode will still be linked, in some version of what Rey calls 'destruction. maintenance'. How then to tell whether capitalism is dominant, has 'taken root'? When capitalist relations of production are generalized When will that be? When capitalism has 'taken root'. Possibly Rey could find his way out of this one, but as they stand his arguments here are uncharacteristically loose.

This seems to be Roxborough's position (op. cit., p. 126).

⁴ Las Albanois, pp. 12–13.

[#] Ibid., p. 22. Cf. 'conservation/dissolution'.

The Relations of Exploitation

A further difficulty arises with an important concept, never defined, which sneaks into Rev's exposition now and again: If feudalism, and above all its determining relation of production, the extortion of ground rent, continues to play a role in the transition to capitalism in those societies where it was previously dominant, one can expect that a similar role would be played by the specific relations of exploitation of another mode of production at the time of the transition from this mode of production to capitalist domination." Or again: "To prepare for the social revolution is to prepare for the abolition of all the relations of exploitation present in the society: which means equally those of the capitalist mode of production itself as those of the ancestral modes of production dominated by it, which from the fact of this domination have taken on a new place and a new meaning and which are henceforth inseparable from the capitalist relations of exploitation themselves. 78 Or a passage cited earlier: 'Capitalism can never immediately and totally eliminate the preceding modes of production, nor above all the relations of exploitation which characterize these modes of production. On the contrary, during an entire period it must reinforce these relations of exploitation.'71

These three quotations evoke a number of comments. The first raises 'homoficence' again in a very specific way, seemingly running counter to Rey's aforementioned stress on violence (which would imply precisely that other pre-capitalist modes had no counterpart on this level with feudalism). The second quotation makes a political point which Frank could happily endorse: revolutionaries should on no account 'put their banner in their pocket' and promote capitalism as a means of advancing socialism.72 More generally, Rey here introduces a term, 'relations of exploitation', which perhaps has more fundamental implications for his analysis than he realizes. To anticipate briefly an argument that will be elaborated later, Rey thus opens a very wide door to those who disagree fundamentally with him on the question of 'units of analysis';73 those, for instance, who are happy to allow that 'forms' of pre-capitalist origin survive at the level of direct relations of production (or of exploitation), but who jib at allowing that entire modes of production could ever coexist and articulate with (as opposed to succeed and overthrow) one another. In particular, especially when coupled with his previously cited vague suggestion of 'transitional modes of production', this line of analysis leads directly to the idea of a colonial mode of production, as outlined in different ways by (among others) Alavi and Banaji. A The latter indeed

Wukh (Bombey), Vol VII, No 52

[●] Tbid , p 21

[&]quot; Ibid , p. 17

n Ibid., pp. 15-16 (emphases added)

⁷ Ibid., p 18

⁷³ Conceptualization of the problem of 'units of analysis' is due to Cheng Ngas-Lung, Underdevelopment and the World Capitalist System An Evaluation of Same Recent Studies, (University of Salford, Department of Sociological and Political Studies, M.Sc. Thesis 1976), e.g. p. 39 This thesis goes well beyond the literature it analyses, and is an original contribution to the field in its own right

Hamza Alavi, India and the Colonial Mode of Production', Socialist Register, London 1975. Jairus Banaji, 'For a Theory of Colonial Modes of Production', Economic and Political

uses the concept 'relations of exploitation' for precisely this purpose, distinguishing it fundamentally from 'relations of production'—as Rey does not—and even citing Rey himself as one of those who 'argue that colonialism must be understood in terms of a specific mode of production'.75 (This is not my reading of Rey's general position at all; but the particular formulations quoted could admittedly be interpreted as Banaji has chosen to.)

The Inside/Outside Distinction

The final objection is perhaps the most complex and fundamental of all. Once again, the point can best be introduced by quoting Rey's own words: 'There are thus two distinct actions of capitalist production: an action in some sense "from the outside", which does not modify the mode of production itself; then an action "from the inside", which permits modification of the mode of production." Or again: "There is nonetheless a fundamental difference between the neo-colonies and the capitalist social formations of Marx's time: the capital which has "taken root" in the neo-colony and which has become its dominant mode of production is itself dependent on a foreign capital to which it provides means of production (raw materials) and from which it receives other types of means of production (machines); but above all, the essential moment of the process of production of this capital is controlled by metropolitan finance capital, or, increasingly, by international finance capital." Or finally, at length: In the case of the transition from the feudal mode of production to the capitalist mode of production, it seem to go without saying that one studies the necessity of that evolution or the basis of feudalism, since capitalism here is born out of nothing. By contrast, in all other known historical examples of the development of capitalism in the womb of a non-capitalist social formation, the capitalism has been imported from elsewhere, already fully grown. One is ther tempted to analyse the necessity of its development solely from the poin of view of its own laws. We shall see however that it is not possible to b content with this one-sided vision, and that the transition phase can only be understood on the basis of the internal characteristics of the mode o production dominant before the intrusion of capital. The socia formation has to bring forth its own form of the transition toward capitalism. Thus is the transitional social formation subject to a doubl history, where the contradiction bursts forth between two orders c necessity: on the one hand the history of capital itself, which for the mos part is written outside such social formations; on the other hand the history of the transition, specific to the modes of production which at there articulated. Conversely, the revelation of this necessity as beininternal to the social formation, even in the case where capitalism arrive fully fledged and where the outcome of the combat is not in doubt, illutrates for us the necessity of the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the character internal to feudalism itself of this necessity: it illustrate the gulf that separates historical materialism from a vulgar evolutionism for which Marx and Engels had nothing but contempt. 778

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 2-3 (of mimeo · I have not been able to see Bansji's paper in print).

[™] Les Alhences, p. 123.

⁷⁷ Ibid , p. 164

[™] Ibid., pp. 70-71.

On the race of it, the fifst of these quotations metry restates the uncome circumstances of the first and second stages of articulation. But the use of the terms 'outside' and 'inside' in this context is provocative. For while is is doubtless true by definition that capitalism always arises in the first instance in some sense 'outside' the antecedent mode of production (meaning only that it is distinctly other and new), there is another levelthat of the social formation—at which one might well wish to make a further distinction: as between societies which could be called the 'homelands' of capitalism on the one hand, and those to which by contrast capitalism came 'from the outside', 'deid grand et bien armé'." What is the theoretical status of this 'inside/outside' distinction, in Rey's work and elsewhere? We saw earlier how Rey warns against confounding the two different levels of analysis, countries and modes of production. His own manifest preference is for the latter: and his much emphasized stress on capitalism's homoficence makes it as true to say of him, as of Marx, that Evidently he does not regard it as ultimately significant whether capitalism arises endogenously within a particular social structure . . . or is introduced from outside. 180

But may not such a distinction in fact be fundamental? Rev's second quotation here certainly suggests that it is. The context is revealing: the paragraph cited is little more than a parenthesis, not subsequently elaborated, inserted in Rey's final general statement of the three phases of articulation. Specifically, it follows the blunt assertion that 'For anyone who wants to make a theoretical study of no matter what particular case of neocolonialism, Marx's texts on ground rent are the best point of departure. Are they? It is at this point in the argument that the 'dependency' perspective, much maligned for its lack of rigour, etc., must surely be called in as at the least an indispensable supplement to modes of production. Without perhaps necessarily questioning Rey's stress on 'the parallelism of the action of capital' as such, it must nonetheless be insisted that there is another and crucial level of analysis at which such a claim is not true, or at least is extremely misleading. For, as we know, very many Marxist writers on the Third World take as their point of departure precisely the lack of homology between capitalism's effects in its countries of origin on the one hand, and those to which it was exported on the other. This is not just a question of origins: as it were (in our earlier metaphor) between 'normal' conception and artificial insemination, either of which may be said to initiate the same process. On the contrary, the surely undeniable claim of 'dependency theory' is that the latter process, unlike the former, produces a grossly deformed progesty. Put another way, the 'extraverted' nature of the Third World's original insertion in the capitalist world economy is not just of historical interest: it is a continuing and defining feature, not to be abstracted from, of the very essence of what we mean by 'underdevelopment'. Certainly we may see the thrust of, and indeed accept, Rey's basic claim that at one level the action of capitalism must be homoficent (else we would not be right to call it by a singular name, capitalism). But this must be complemented by

Les Alliences, p. 164.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 70.

Aidan Foster-Carter, 'Marxism and the "Fact of Conquest"', The African Rever, Vol VI, No. 1, 1976, pp. 21-2.

analysis at the level of social formations and their interrelationships, in a world system, which gives analytical pride of place to what Rey blithely grants en passent: that capitalism comes to the 'Third World' from the outside, as foreign capitalism, indeed as colonial capitalism; and the extraversion thus created persists, defining the character of contemporary underdevelopment, viz. as an externally oriented, distorted and indeed disarticulated 'part-economy' subordinated (now, as ever) to metropolitan capital.

Rey's analysis cannot handle these notions. The long third passage quoted above seems at times to be moving in this direction, but stops way short. The only concession Rey makes to the specificity of the Third World is to the particularity of its pre-capitalist modes of production, and hence of its paths of transition to capitalism. Of course, he is right to stress this, and to criticize those (from Marx to Luxemburg) who see capital always as principal actor and pre-capitalism always as passive and formless victim. It is perfectly true that the character of the resulting social formation reflects not only the dynamics of capitalism but also those of the pre-capitalist mode—precisely, it is constituted by their articulation. Where Rey goes wrong concerns the manner of insertion of such social formations into a wider system. For the 'history of capital itself' continues to be 'written outside such social formations'.

Are there alternative theoretical formulations that can better handle these phenomena? Possibly none have yet been fully elaborated, but there are pointers. In a paper written five years ago (though only recently published), the present writer presented the problematic as being Marxism's mability as it stood to theorize what Marx himself called 'the fact of conquest'. In a series of related distinctions, it was argued that 'capitalism' (in general, in the abstract) must be distinguished as a level of analysis from its concretizations, plural, as capitalisms (e.g. national, and rival); that capitalism(s) should be seen as not merely processual and developmental, but also relational and interactional; and above all that there was and is a crucial distinction between where capitalism arose internally within a social formation (typically analysed by Marxists as the 'normal' case, i.e. the European model) and where it was imposed from the outside (the colonial and hence Third-world case, hitherto inadequately theorized by Marxists). These formulations, produced ir ignorance of the 'modes of production' literature, now seem to me crude and unsatisfactory; yet they are still trying to grasp at something which Rey misses.84 Part of it has subsequently been conceptualized by Wallerstein and Amin (in different ways), with the notion of a work system. This seems to me (although space forbids a detailed treatment) to be in some form an absolutely indispensable framework for the Marxis analysis of underdevelopment.

[#] Ibid , pp. \$9, 139.

See note 80 above

In discussion at the State University of New York at Bingampton, B. Magubansuggested that 'conquest' was indeed the key issue, implying that to re-pose the issues i terms of 'articulation' was a subtraction from knowledge. I think there is a place for both Wallerstein and Amin, op cit. Cheng (op cit, chapter 3) has an excellent exposition an critique of these two writers' different concepts of 'world system'

Rey, however, has no such conception. Perhaps more surprisingly, he also ignores some admittedly tentative but exceedingly suggestive hints from a source in which he is undoubtedly well versed: namely, Balibar's elaboration of Althusser's treatment of historical time. Specifically in the context of colonialism and the 'event' of conquest of precolonial societies, Balibar notes that 'This event in their history is produced in the time of their diachrony without being produced in the time of their diachrony without being produced in the time of their dynamics: a limit case which brings out the conceptual difference between the two times, and the necessity of thinking their articulation. Balibar's conception here seems to me entirely right, indeed brilliant. The 'fact of conquest', from which Rey abstracts, is here posed as the central analytical problem, which is what it is.

The Further History of a Concept: Bradby and Post

No attempt will be made here to chart in detail the subsequent career of the idea of articulation of modes of production. Instead, some of the more significant contributions (especially on the theoretical side) will be briefly examined. The work of Bradby has already been cited. This is perhaps the most systematic general treatment of the articulation problematic in English, as well as being the only available summary of Rey's work. We have also alluded to her critique of Rey's treatment of violence (some of Bradby's other criticisms of Rey-e.g. for alleged psychologism;87 and her reductio ad absurdum of articulation as being principally concerned with labour supplies to the exclusion of all else are however misplaced). Her own principal contribution is methodological: discouragingly, but quite rightly, she detects a number of ambiguities in the very terms used to discuss articulation. Pre-capitalist', for instance has a double meaning: 1. historically preceding capitalism; 2. technically inferior to capital-15m. (In fact the case is worse still; not only is there a third sense, logically prior to capitalism, but the problematic of articulation must envisage a capitalism which not only conserves these ambiguous entities but even on occasion—in defiance of diachrony—actively creates them! This paradox in particular is neglected by most writers on articulation.)

Likewise, 'capitalism' itself as an actor has ambiguities (in addition to the previously discussed matter of reification). Bradby finds it necessary to distinguish 1. capital as a whole; 2. individual capitals; 3. branches of

Althusser and Balibar, op. cit., p. 301.

[&]quot;Bradby, op cit., pp. 131-8. Bradby finds Rey's position 'bourgeous colonial' in implying 'psychological resistance' on the part of the colonized, and says 'he never really analyses the ***exessive** reasons which may lead to a ***genum** "resistance" to destruction on the part of precapitalist modes' (ibid, emphasis added). This really is the nadir of reflication. What does it mean to talk of 'modes of production' resisting, if not **psychological?* The fact that Bradby feels obliged to put 'resistance' in quotation marks even while describing it as 'genuine' (which peoples' resistance presumably is not') perhaps suggests a little shame at this violence to language and to Marxism. The proper criticism of 'bourgeous colonial' apologists is not that they worked on the psychological level, but their assimilation of this to the sphere of the **tratesal**, in the manner of Weber's concept of 'traditional action' A holistic concept of modes of production as 'resisting' must incorporate the psychological level—it is people that resist, and they do so for good reason—as an integral part of the concept of mode of production

[™] Ibid, pp. 148-9 This is not my interpretation of Rey.

[■] Ibid., p 127

capital, 4. countervaining tendencies. Moreover, capitalism (an perhaps each of the foregoing) has different stages of development, 4 which both its needs and capabilities may alter. Bland talk of 'capitalism doing or being this and that, in relation to other modes of production must therefore be unpacked into more precise and limited propositions

Thirdly, the various 'needs' which capitalism (or whatever) may be sai to have must be systematized (and is their fulfilment from pre-capitalis modes, as opposed to internally, a matter of necessity or just contingency?). 91 Bradby distinguishes four possible positions here. Firs there is Luxemburg's theory of capitalism permanently requiring a 'exterior' as a market, but (Midas-like) destroying as it touches: throug contact the 'exterior' itself becomes capitalized, and so ceases to be usabl qua exterior. Then there is Lenin's quite different theory of imperialism this time the need is not for markets, but to export capital, and it is not permanent necessity but comes into being at a certain stage. Differer again are more recent writers (such as Meillassoux and Wolpe) wh emphasize capitalism's predilection for labour supplies reproduce (literally!) within another mode of production, thereby cutting wag costs. Finally, one may eschew a priori's and argue that 'Capitalism ha different needs of pre-capitalist economies at different stages of development, which arise from specific historical circumstances, e.g. ray materials, land, labour power, and at times of crisis, markets." The seems to be Bradby's own position: nothing is permahent, although (these factors raw materials (and not, as Rey argues, labour power) is fc her the most durable of capitalism's external requirements.**

In a very different vein, Ken Post has also recently elaborated the concerof articulation in the context of applying it to a large-scale project on th history of the Jamaican working class. As such, 'articulation' is one of repertory of key concepts (others are 'practice', 'instance', 'structure 'totality', 'combination', 'determination', and 'contradiction') whose provenance is palpably Althusserian. What is so stimulating about Post work, however, is that instead of merely erecting yet another steril theoretical edifice he actually puts these terms to work, and gets goo mileage out of them; for once, the dry and dusty Althusserian bones ge up and dance in a veritable zombie jamboree. Amazingly, Post's Jamaic contains people as well as modes of production; characters like th Prophet Bedward (who failed to ascend into heaven on 31 December 1920) jostle the pages with 'instances' and 'practices'. MIt is a heady brew whose raison d'être is summarized by its author in a formulation c admirable balance: 'An attempt to formulate a view of a complex socu totality, the internal structures of which determine the possibilities of huma action. ** This is surely the spirit, which one was beginning to fear extinc of Marx's famous adage that 'people make their own history, but they d not make it exactly as they please'. In recent years we have heard much c

no Ibid., pp. 129, 149

⁹¹ Ibid., p 128

[™] Ibid., p. 129.

Ibid., p. 149.

M Post, op. cit.

^{*} Ibid., pp 10-17. (All page numbers refer to Post's Ms, mimeo)

[™] Ibid., p. 21 (emphasis added)

demonstrated, that nonetheless people do make history.

Again, space forbids a detailed account of this stimulating work. We have already mentioned Post's concept of articulation as implying expression as well as linkage, and suggested that effectivity might be a more appropriate denotation (especially when it is modes of production that are being articulated, as opposed to say instances within a mode of production). Two other points of theory may be noted. First, Post is right to give more weight to a concept akin to articulation and more venerable, viz. 'combination'*7 (as in Trotsky's 'uneven and combined development'), than Althusser, who does use the concept—it rates a glossary entry—but rather insubstantially, seemingly as the vessel whose structural content is articulation. Secondly, Post is as emphatic as Rey on the necessity of structural change over time, and he goes further than Rey in giving due weight to the concept of contradiction as a counterpoint to articulation; he even speaks of 'articulation among contradictions', as well as (conversely) contradiction as the nature of articulations.

Empirically, Post's argument in brief is that the Jamaican slave plantation articulated two 'complementary but antagonistic modes of production': one being slavery (which Post regards as a mode of production su generis, and not itself capitalist), the other the slaves' growing their own food. Slavery as a mode of production was articulated also into the global system of exchange. (Proceeding from Marx's characterization of 'production, distribution, exchange and consumption' as 'members of a totality, distinctions within a unity', Post is prepared to talk not only of 'modes of production' but also of 'modes' of exchange and distribution.)100 After emancipation there was a change of instance, but not of practice:101 capitalism in Jamaica now entered the spheres of production and distribution, and not just exchange. (There are echoes here of Rey's suggestion that in the first phase of articulation capitalism only occupies the superstructure.)108 This change reflected the changing periodization in the metropolis; from the early nineteenth century, a more industrial capitalism 'at home' ceased to need the pre-capitalist mode in Jamaica. But capitalism was not thenceforth the only mode of production in Jamaica. The slaves' former subsistence production showed considerable resilience, eventuating into a peasant mode of production in a highly contradictory articulation (this is evidently Rey's second phase) with a capitalism itself enmeshed in contradictions: structurally dependent on foreign monopoly capital, and first striving to 'break' the peasant mode in order to be assured of labour supplies, then incapable of developing enough to make use of that labour once it did begin to present itself (in torrents-ultimately diverted into emigration).

Post's analysis is not without loose ends: articulation as expression will

⁹⁷ Ibid , e.g. pp 27, 32.

Ibid., pp. 41ff.

[™] Ibid., p. 37. (This is a summary of pp. 32ff.)

¹ Tbid., p. 30.

¹⁰¹ Ibad., p. 33.

Let Cf. Bradby, op cit., p. 145.

somewhere, incoherently; 103 'combination' and 'articulation' remain inadequately distinguished; and the implications of (broader) articulation into a global system of exchange raise once again the vexed question of 'units of analysis'. But it is work of this nature and on this level, rather than 'towards a general theory' of anything, that will advance our understanding of both concrete reality and appropriate theory.

Critics of Articulation: Alavi and McEachern

Needless to say the concept of articulation of modes of production is not without its critics, some of whose reactions we have already reviewed. There are still many who see no need to talk of articulation, or even (much) of modes of production. Dependency theorists may regard the whole thing as a passing fashion. 104 The more empirically minded are exasperated by, and hence ignore, what they regard not as theory but theology. Alavi is foremost among those critics who, while accepting (and indeed deeply embroiled in) the sort of problematic which 'articulation' is about, nonetheless entirely reject the notion itself. His position must be seen as a contribution to an important but still not widely known debate on the proper characterization of Indian agriculture, which took place principally in the pages of the Bombay journal Economic and Political Weekly between 1970 and 1973. It is impossible to examine this debate in detail here; happily this has been done in recent essays by both Alavi himself and McEachern. 105 Suffice it to say that the discussion raised many of the key questions of articulation. even though the term itself was hardly used by any of the protagonists.

In brief, attempts to label particular sectors of Indian agriculture as 'feudal' or 'capitalist' revealed divergent ideas as to what were the appropriate criteria. For Rudra, who started it all, a narrowly statistica) method revealed no capitalists, hence there could be no capitalism, sc there must be feudalism. Patnaik agreed there was not capitalism (unless very recently), but on little else. Criticizing Rudra's theory and methods she argued for the complex specificity of the colonial economy, in terms reminiscent of articulation, 28 'a unique transitional structure, which is the outcome of colonisation and integration into the world capitalissystem of a pre-capitalist economy'. 100 Å new class was developing within the old mode of production, without however transforming the relation of production. It was not enough, for Patnaik, to point to production for the market nor the growth of landless labourers as evidence for the presence of capitalism; this could only come about through the reinvestment of surplus in expanded agricultural production Chattopadhyay, conversely, endorsed Patnaik's entique of Rudra but fell she should call a spade a spade: as Lenin argued, once you have generalized commodity production plus landless labour, you do have

¹⁶⁰ Post, op cit. p. 37.

¹⁰⁴ I have heard F. H. Cardoso dismiss the topic in these terms

¹⁸⁶ Alavi, op cit.; D. McEachern, "The Mode of Production in India", Journal Contemporary Airs 1976. See also Brian Davey, 'Modes of Production and Socio-Econom Formations', South Aira Markett Revers, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1975)

W Quoted by Davey, op cit, p. 4

mentioned distinction between relations of production and what he called 'relations or forms of exploitation' to endorse Patnaik's 'brillian polemics' by developing a theory of a colonial mode (or modes) of production, not capitalist but combining 'a variety of relations of exploitation'. 107

McEachern, analysing the whole discussion, distinguished four key indicators around which the debate revolved: generalized commodity production; free wage labour; capital's entering into production of merely circulation; and the significance of tenancy relations. He himself is favourably disposed towards Banaji's distinction between relations of production and of exploitation (inasmuch as it allows that the survival of pre-capitalist 'forms' at the point of production may nonetheless 'concease change in the effective relations of production'. Also, he admits it principle the possibility of 'combination' of modes of production in a sense which is basically Rey's 'articulation'. Yet for McEachern, India today is not in fact characterized either by articulation, or by a 'colonial mode of production', but by a 'particularly constricted form of capitalism'; the constriction deriving from India's 'international connection'.

The international connection is also crucial for Alavi. His argument is that 'the impact of imperialism was to disarticulate the Indian economy and then reintegrate in components with the metropolitan economy in such a way as to preclude the autonomous accumulation of capital within India.'111 This clearly implies something akin to the notion of a 'worldsystem' à la Wallerstein and Amın (the idea of 'disarticulation' is also Amin's). Ingeniously, Alavi thus reverses many recent preoccupations by suggesting the need to theorize, not just (for him, not at all) the articulation of multiple modes of production within a single social formation, but rather a single mode of production 'inserted into several social formations'.112 Likewise, although the idea of 'disarticulation' is probably not in itself inconsistent with articulation—for the latter is precisely a reconstitution of elements undone by the former—it does serve as a reminder of one of the most fundamental effects of the whole process: namely the 'taking apart' of what were formerly (in Luxemburg's phrase) 'natural economies', so as to integrate bits of them into international capitalism. 113

What is perhaps less convincing is Alavi's characterization of India as

¹⁸⁷ Banaji, op. cit. The summary of the various positions here owes much to McEachern.
188 McEachern, op. cit., p. 4 of mimeo.

¹⁰d., p. 9.

¹¹⁰ Tbid., p. 12.

¹¹¹ As summarized by Roxborough, op. cit., p 130.

¹¹⁸ Alavi, op cit., p. 191.

¹¹³ Many writers emphasize this aspect. For instance, P. Ehrensaft ('Semi-Industrial Capitalism in the Third World', Africa Tooley, January 1971) speaks of 'structures of domination' with this is mind. Conversely, a viable development strategy would be conceived in terms of re-establishing a natural economy, putting the bits back together again, and ending the paradox of 'producing what one does not consume, consuming what one does not produce'. For a proneering statement of such a strategy, see C Y Thomas, Dependence and Transfermation, New York 1974.

discrepancy between his general theoretical obiter dicta and his owr concrete analysis. Alavi will have none of the notion of articulation. For him, a social formation (which is concrete) will contain more than one mode of production (abstract); but the relationship between the latter is characterized by contradiction. Moreover, he reserves 'mode o production' for a relatively complex unity, encompassing such levels at the political, which may itself be said to be internally articulated (in the original Althusserian sense). So, for Alavi, the defence of the Marxis concept of contradiction requires that conceptions like Laclau's 'indissoluble unity' of feudalism and capitalism be reformulated as 's hierarchical structural relationship within a single mode of production namely the colonial mode of production'. 114

The difficulty with the idea of a 'colonial mode of production' is, o: course, to specify its precise relationship to capitalism. That it is in some sense the product of capitalism, or at least of imperialism, is not in question. (In that sense, it is a virtue of the term 'colonial mode or production' that it at once suggests the 'internal/external' distinction whose absence was earlier criticized in Rev.) But that said, is the colonia mode a transitional one, between feudalism and capitalism? That seems to be Banaji's view, and also at times Alavi's. Alternatively, is it a formalbeit an incipient and distorted form—of the capitalist mode itselfi Either position raises difficulties. If it is the former, then Alavi ir particular-by elaborating not only a colonial mode, but also (briefly) a 'protocolonial mode' before it and a 'post-colonial mode' after it 1111 seems to risk an infinite regress of transitions between transitions between...(not unlike Rey's articulation between articulations between...) He might further be accused of giving too much substance to what other would regard as only changing 'forms', and thus contravening his owr holistic criteria for what constitutes a mode of production. But the alternative is no better. For if the colonial mode is in some sense itself capitalist, as opposed to being transitional to capitalism—a position again which both Alavi and Banaji seem to take at times—then the problem of units of analysis arises with a vengeance, not to mention 'homoficence' and our earlier critique of concepts like 'peripheral capitalism' (which seem to suggest an entity that both is and is not itself at the same time).

'Articulation' might solve some of these problems, though not all. Certainly Alavi can be reassured that it does not gainsay the idea of 'contradiction'; as we have seen, Rey is much more sensitive to this point than others have been since, and indeed for him articulation defines and specifies the nature of the contradictions. Rey has thus added a whole new dimension to the older debate on 'transition', which now in retrospect looks oddly unbalanced. It is as if Dobb and Sweezy were debating whether the capitalist weed grew up within the garden of feudalism (Dobb), or came under the fence from next door (Sweezy). In both cases they implicitly assume that the weed is new, and magnetic (which is true), they then infer what is not true, that therefore its pollination and growth can be explained on the basis of its own characteristics and tendencies

¹¹⁴ Alavi, op. cit, pp 172ff and 175

¹¹⁵ Thid, pp 184, 193.

sociation', so contradiction among modes of production is a form of articulation. Each concept needs the other: articulation without contradiction would indeed be static and anti-Marxist; but contradiction without articulation (or transition without articulation) fallaciously implies that the waxing and waning of modes of production are quite separate activities, each internally determined, whereas in fact they are linked as are wrestlers in a clinch. This granted, Alavi's argument might be better formulated in terms of an articulation of modes of production rather than coining a colonial mode. Yet the latter, as just noted, does raise the central question (although arguably misposing it) of colonialism and imposition, which 'articulation' does not. These issues will be returned to below.

Roxborough and Wallerstein

Two other critics of articulation may be briefly noted. Roxborough seems to be wrong (both in characterizing the literature, and as a matter of fact) when he distinguishes transitions of displacement of modes of production (as in Western Europe) from articulation as coexistence or symbiosis. 116 Rey's whole purpose is to theorize the (meta-)similarities of the two cases, as at one level a single type of process. Roxborough may also be wrong in thinking articulation implies that 'the notion that all modes of production must contain within them the seeds of their own transformation must be discarded'.117 For no one is claiming that it lasts for ever; and Rey is at pains to assert the influence of the pre-capitalist mode on the articulation. But Roxborough is surely correct on a more philosophical point: 'Social formation cannot be the empirical existence of the mode of production. since it may contain or be constituted from more than one mode of production. If so, both concepts are merely analytical, and it is not immediately obvious how their empirical boundaries are to be specified.'118 'Social formation' (a term which in any case is overdue for some of the attention lavished on 'mode of production') cannot simply denote a concrete complex of modes of production; like the latter term, it is itself a conceptual abstraction (albeit one whose reference is more complex and concrete than is mode of production). Yet many Marxist writers seem to operate with a very crude methodological model, of which 'abstract/concrete'—and that old favourite 'appearance/reality' constitute the entire repertoire. Roxborough is also right to note that questions of 'base' and 'superstructure', such as the State, would if we accept articulation have to be posed at the level of the social formation, articulating as this does several modes of production.119

Finally, it should be observed that the spirit of Frank ('it is all capitalism') is not dead. There is a certain logic, as noted by both Alavi and Roxborough, in slicing through such complex and elusive entities as 'semi-feudalism' or 'colonial mode of production' with the assertion of a single ultimately inclusive unity, the world capitalist systems. This

¹¹⁶ Roxborough, op. cit, p. 126.

¹¹⁷ Th. J

Op. cit, p. 127 (emphasis added)

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp 126-7

categorically rule out any notion of articulation, masmuch as it is now the mode of production which is singular: 'A mode of production is a characteristic of an economy, and an economy is defined by an effective, ongoing division of productive labour. Ergo, to discover the mode of production that prevails, we must know what are the real bounds of the division of labor of which we are speaking. Neither individual units of production nor political or cultural entities may be described as having a mode of production; only economies. Given this premise there are only four possible modes of production, only three of which have been known thus far in empirical reality. They are reciprocal mini-systems, redistributive world-empires, a capitalist world economy, and a socialist world government.' 1200

This is certainly one extreme way of resolving the maddening in-between quality of the notion of mode of production: redefine it upwards, as it were, to constitute the totality of the object of thought. It may well be preferred to the opposite solution, which is to define it 'downwards' to 'on farm/in firm' relations at the point of production, thus producing inevitable inflation and debasement of the coinage: each Andean valley has its own mode of production, and individuals may change them two or three times a week like underwear. But Wallerstein's solution too has its conceptual price. Apart from such interesting side issues as working 'forwards' as well as 'backwards' (not only 'feudalism', but 'socialism' toc in all its myriad varieties becomes capitalism; and not just a capitalist world system, which might readily be allowed, but a capitalist mode of production), and despite Wallerstein's efforts to give this totality ar hierarchical internal structure of 'core', 'periphery' and 'semi-periphery' the key question of 'modes of labour control' is ultimately reduced to contingency. What Wallerstein calls 'coerced cash crop labour' (to distinguish it from true 'feudalism', which like Alavi he sees principally it terms of a localized economy181), either reflects the core-periphery distinction, or unskilled v. skilled labour, or just happens to be the mos effective way of getting hold of this or that particular product at this or that particular place and time. Yet again, there is no space here for . detailed critique, except to say that it must seem doubtful in principle whether the complex issues we have been discussing can be so drasticall bulldozed into a level reductionism; and that while Wallerstein is right to assert the existence of a world system, this is likely to be a complex whole containing multiple modes of production (and perhaps not linking ther at the level of production at all, but rather of exchange).

What is at Stake

Ultimately, particular vocabularies are less significant than the concept that they express. What is important about the term 'articulation' is the questions that it has made it possible to raise, even if it has not itse

181 See, for example, Wallerstein, The Modern World System, op. cit., pp. 120-7.

¹³⁰ Immanuel Wallerstein, 'Civilmations and Modes of Production' Conflicts ar Convergences', April 1977 (mimeo), p. 5.

essay—or a book, or several—to go into all the implications, some key issues and directions for further work can be tentatively suggested.

First, theoretical synthesis in the field of Marxist development theory is now overdue. To say this is not to gloss over the very real and sometimes fundamental (but perhaps not always) differences of approach among Marxists by suggesting an unrigorous eclecticism for its own sake. Yet it does seem to be true, and wrong, that the very recrudescence of Marxist analysis is tending, like a tide going out, to create little rock pools increasingly unconnected to one another, in which narrowly circumscribed issues are discussed separately and without thought of their mutual implications. Thus the 'dependency' literature scarcely attempts to 'place' itself in the older (or newer) 'imperialism' literature, any more than the 'modes of production' writers attempt to situate themselves in either. (There are, of course, honourable exceptions—Rey, with his review of theories of imperialism, being one.) Nor do Marxists always transcend, as they should, the subject disciplines—as irrational as African boundaries—of the bourgeois social scientists. Instead Marxist sociologists discuss 'class', political scientists 'the State', and economists 'capitalogic'. More specifically, the last few years have seen debates on such various topics as 'the development of underdevelopment', 'unequal exchange', 'the post-colonial state', 'the national bourgeoisie', the 'world system', the 'petty commodity mode of production', 'petty-bourgeois politics', 'dependency', 'sub-imperalism', 'the internationalization of capital', 'peasants and revolution', and indeed many others ('articulation' included). Yet each of these mini-debates almost inevitably takes as ceteris paribus matters which are themselves the variables at issue in the other debates. It is in this sense that a broader synthesis now seems called for.

It is perhaps possible to be more specific, though still tentative, in stating some substantive themes for such a synthesis on the basis of the present discussion of articulation. First, leaving aside the problems of 'modes of production' and 'social formations', it seems that there are entities both greater and smaller than either of these which need to be theorized. One is the world system, constituted perhaps by relations of exchange rather than consisting of a unitary mode of production. Such a term at least sets the essential boundaries, within which theories of the unequal relations between other entities (be it 'states', 'social formations' or 'modes of production'—and it will probably be all three) can be conceptualized.

At least the world system has begun recently to be the object of theoretical attention. But this is not the case, as it should be, at the other end of the scale with the clusive but apparently ubiquitous entity known loosely as 'forms' of production, 'relations of exploitation', 'at the point' of production', 'on farm/in firm' relations, etc. Whatever their other differences, almost all the authors surveyed have some such conception. Acknowledging that, in the complex social formations of the Third World, 'appearance' and 'reality' may be even further apart than usual, they are naturally reluctant to identify these almost infinitely multiplex and variable relations as being the sort of thing Marx was really referring to in a famous passage: 'It is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers... which reveals

One of the less well remembered aspects of Frank's work is his convincing critique of 'on farm' determinism. As part of his attack on 'the myth of feudalism' in Latin America, he emphasizes 'fluidity in ownerworker relations', as exemplified by: 'a single worker who is simultaneously (i) owner of his own land and house, (ii) sharecropper on another's land . . . , (iii) tenant on a third's land, (iv) wage worker during harvest time on one of these lands, and (v) independent trader of his own home produced commodities." It is not necessary to agree with Frank's specific conclusion (that each of these represent moves of maximizing strategy, in a 'dog-eat-dog capitalist world'194) in order to take the general point. Whatever a mode of production is, if we mean it to bear serious explanatory weight it had better be somewhere further up the hierarchy than this. (Just how far is, of course, controversial: as witness Frank versus Laclau; the Indian debate; 'articulation' versus 'colonial mode of production'; indeed all the preceding discussion.) But this still leaves the forms' themselves to be theorized (hopefully with something more than a shibboleth about 'appearance' and 'reality'). Banaji's 'relations of exploitation' may point the way here; although it still needs to be spelled out how a single mode of production can combine so large a number of variant 'forms', if the term is not to be merely residual.

So much for the top and bottom ends of the hierarchy: what comes between? Certainly, it is not in fact a homogeneous hierarchy ('form—mode of production—social formation—world system') after the fashion of Frank's rough and ready 'metropolis-satellite' chain. The links at each level are not likely to be homologous, either in form or content. In a loose sense, it is possible to talk (and people do) of 'articulation' at any or all of these levels; but at the moment in most cases this can mean little more than a (necessary) recognition of the existence of a level of interconnection, while presupposing almost nothing about its precise shape or character. Nonetheless, still tentatively, two guidelines may perhaps be suggested: to move away from twin reductionisms that current debate has not always avoided, but future discussion may.

The first path to be rejected is the sterile assertion of the analytical priority of relations of production over those of exchange and indeed all else Granted that at a certain point in the debate this introduced a necessary rigour into the argument, it may still be that on this issue Frank has the last word over Laclau. Or we may cite, as does Post, Marx's dictum tha 'production, distribution, exchange and consumption . . . all form the members of a totality, distinctions within a unity'. Or again, a Friedman suggests in an interesting recent article, it may be possible to undercut a sterile debate by focusing not on production but on the

¹³⁸ From Capital, Vol III, chapter 47, (as cited by Althusser in Althusser and Balibar,) og

cat., p. 176.

183 André Gunder Frank, Capitalism and Underdoolopment in Latin America, New York 196pp. 271-2 Cf the discussion in Cheng, op. cat., pp. 25-7.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 273-4

¹⁵⁶ Post, op cat., p 30.

reproduction of total systems, in which of course exchange prays a clucial part. (How would you decide which of the heart or the stomach was 'basic'? The question is meaningless.)

The second pitfall to be avoided is a narrow economism. This has characterized much recent debate, thereby contributing to the curiously unreal and cerebral nature of some 'modes of production' literature. Reification aside, too little attention has been paid to other 'instances' and 'practices' than the economic: notably the political, not to mention those areas (ideology, religion, kinship ideas) which correspond to peoples' own consciousness of their position. This is not a plea for ethnomethodology. But it is most certainly a clarion call for class, seen as the key mediator between (to oversimplify) modes of production and human action (and the latter not merely as puppetry, with modes of production playing God).127 It is to endorse Anderson's view that: 'The "superstructures" of kinship, religion, laws or the state necessarily enter into the constitutive structure of the mode of production in precapitalist social formations'.188 Or Arrighi's more audacious claim: 'the division of the world in national states, ethnic groups, races etc. with unequal power is not a purely superstructural phenomenon, but is something that strongly influences class interests and must therefore be taken into account in the very process of defining classes."129

I am not suggesting that propositions of this nature as they stand are more than charters, which need to be filled out. Certainly at the moment they lack the precision of argument which in recent years has been focused so narrowly on modes of production. But what formulations like this lack in rigour, they more than make up for in vigour: they point unmistakably to the realities of our time, even if they do not as yet do much to unravel them. Further work must surely focus on 'people make their own history', as well as acquiring a more rounded conception of the 'but they do not make it exactly as they please'. Articulation, as we saw earlier, is a term deriving from anatomy, a science whose demonstration requires that the subject be dead. By contrast, the urgent task now might be said to be to elaborate a phynology of underdevelopment. But in a world where a country of less than one million people has just spent £350 million hosting one of the Organization of African Unity's less consequential summits (in Libreville, Gabon-July 1977), the purpose of the exercise must never be forgotten: the training of doctors to carry out urgent major surgery.

¹⁸⁰ J Friedman, 'Markist Theory and Systems of Total Reproduction Part I: Negative', Critique of Anthropology, Vol. II, No. 7, Autumn 1976.

¹⁸⁷ It is the great ment of Robert Brenner's major recent article, 'The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism', NLR 104, July-August 1977 (unfortunately this appeared after the present essay was completed), that it unambiguously restates the analytical primacy of class and class struggle in the study of development and underdevelopment

¹⁹⁸ Perry Anderson, Passegus from Autoquity to Fendalism, London 1975, p. 403

¹³⁰ Giovanni Arrighi, cited in Foster-Carter, 'Marxism and the "Fact of Conquest", op cit. p. 32.

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'Labour and Monopoly Capital'

la recent issue of NLR, Bob Rowthorn called Harry Braverman's Labour and lonopoly Capital¹ 'one of the two most important works of Marxist political onomy to have appeared in English in the last decade'. The book's apparently itheoretical approach is deceptive. In a simple style, but with great attention to stail, the author describes the inter-and intra-occupational shifts which have ken place in twentieth-century American capitalism and the capital movements hich they mirror. But this is not a mere painstaking historical exercise; raverman's analysis is rich with insights of great relevance to contemporary plitical economy. Moreover, in two key respects, the work represents a genuine and substantive advance. In the first place, Braverman takes as his starting-point pitalist production rather than income distribution and demand, and focuses ithin this on the capitalist labour-process. Secondly, he combines rigorous ecretical analysis with vehement and eloquent indictment of the effects of the pitalist labour-process on the working class—a reintroduction of the critical d demystificatory element long absent from Marxist political economy. The last

person to make written anything of substance on the incom-process was Marx himself. It is, therefore, worth enquiring why this topic should have emerged so suddenly from relative obscurity.

Many writers have noted the shift in focus of Marxist theory since the late sixties, away from philosophical concerns and towards the more classical preoccupations of an active Marxism. Labour and Monopoly Capital is without doubt a major representative of that trend. It parallels the turn which, since the 'new leftism' of the sixties, a new generation of political activists has been making in recent years towards the working class. In that respect, although Braverman explicitly presents his book as complementary to the project undertaken by Baran and Sweezy in their Monopoly Capital (1966), it in fact represents a substantial break with the latter's theoretical and political framework. For unlike Baran and Sweezy, Braverman is confident of the central revolutionary role of the industrial working class in the struggle to overthrow capitalism; at the same time, he rejects their 'moral' redefinition of the Marxist concept of surplus.

However, Braverman himself of course, who died in 1976 at the tragically early age of fifty-six, does not fall into the 'new generation' alluded to above. On the contrary, not just his age, but also his formation-fourteer years as a skilled metal-worker and active militant in the forties and fiftie (he was a prominent member of the Socialist Workers' Party until 1953) followed by almost as long working in the offices of publishing housesmarked him off clearly from it. And this background clearly had: significant influence on his book. But if Braverman's personal experience was an important factor in making him write on the labour-process, h did so nevertheless in the context of the changing conjuncture of Marxis theory. He was aware of this himself, and in the Introduction discusse the stimuli which impelled him to re-open theoretical discussion on thi long neglected topic. He argues that the seemingly exhaustive treatmen of the subject in Capital, coupled with the more immediate problem presented to Marxism by the events of the early twentieth century, led to lack of analysis of changes in the labour-process.

Marxists and the Capitalist Organization of Production

This blind spot, according to Braverman, developed into a more serior error in the form of an increasing acceptance by Marxists of the specif form of labour-process developed by capitalism. The tremendous is crease in scientific intricacy and productivity of the labour-process in the early part of the century led the Marxists of the Second International is see the modern factory system as an inevitable if perfectible form of porganization. Later, the situation facing the new Soviet state and its new to develop industrial production led the capitalist labour process in order to catch up with the capitalist world in preparation for the building socialism. Thus 'the ideological effect was felt throughout wor Marxism: the technology of capitalism, which Marx had treated we cautious reserve, and the organization and administration of labour

¹ Harry Braverman, Labour and Manopoly Capital, New York 1974.

Bob Rowthorn, 'Mandel's Late Capitalism', NLR 98

acceptable. Now the revolution against capitalism was increasingly conceived as a matter of stripping away from the highly productive mechanism of capitalism certain "excrescences", improving the conditions of work, adding to the factory organization a formal structure of "workers' control", and replacing the capitalist mechanisms of accumulation and distribution with socialist planning. However, argues Braverman, the rapid pace of development in the capitalist countries after the Second World War, together with the impact of certain features of the Cuban and Chinese revolutions, has begun to focus new attention on the labour-process.

Now, Braverman is correct to point out that little analysis of the labourprocess has been done since Capital; the compulsory recapitulation of Marx in most current work on the topic testifies to this. He also has good cause to draw attention to the uncritical attitude of Second- and Third-International Marxists to the capitalist labour-process, and the effects this had on their ideas on socialist production. However, this is not a mere isolated error-it forms an integral part of a whole traditional Marxist orthodoxy. And the role accorded to the labour-process and technology in this Marxist tradition is, in fact, better understood in terms of the connection it posited between forces and relations of production. The 'stages' theory of Second-International Marxism, with its over-simplified model in which relations of production first develop and then fetter the forces of production, was it is true dealt a severe blow by the Russian Revolution. The Bolshevik assertion of the socialist character of the revolution involved recognition of the complex inter-relationship between the international dimension of the productive forces and the existence of individual nation states. Thus, at a theoretical level, there was a partial re-assembly of the non-mechanical conceptualization of the relationship between forces and relations of production that had been present in the work of Marx, but distorted in the Marxism of the Second International.4 But this break with the sconomic determinism of previous Marxism was not fully developed into a complete break with the technological determinism with which it was in symbiosis. A corollary of the mechanistic view of forces and relations of production had been a granting of complete primacy to the material means of production within the forces of production.

This error remained general in Soviet Marxism. Bukharin's formulation can be taken as typical: 'in the last analysis, society is dependent on the development of technique, which is the basic determinacy of the productive forces of society'. It is in the context of such views that the uncritical attitude towards the capitalist labour process which Braverman so rightly stresses takes on its full force. The fact that the Soviet state was forced to construct productive forces which had not been created by a preceding phase of capitalist development must have been a strong material factor in forming the attitude of Soviet Marxism to the capitalist

Nikolai Bukharin, Historical Materialism, London 1921

Braverman, op. cit, pp 12-13

⁴ This issue is discussed in more detail in my Technology and the Productive Forces in Marxist Thought (M.Sc Thesis), Manchester 1975.

See, for example, Georgi Plekhanov, Fundamental Problems of Marxism, London 1969, p 51.

inherited from the theorists of the Second International. (It is, of course, a material factor equally at work in China or Cuba, though this was not something which Braverman understood.)

Braverman's Contribution: a Critical Summary

So much for past positions; it is more difficult to interpret the forces behind the recent re-opening of discussion of the labour process. It is probably better to approach that problem via the substance of the discussion itself, and turn first to a summary of Braverman's contribution. In Labour and Monopoly Capital, he sets out to investigate two phenomena: first, the apparent decrease in the proportion of the American working class employed in manufacturing and associated industries—the so-called 'blue-collar workers'; secondly, the apparent contradiction in the literature on automation between a view which emphasizes the increased need for training, education and skill in the workforce, and a view which emphasizes the increasing sub-division of tasks and corresponding mindlessness of work. Declining to make any premature assumption about the existence or non-existence of a 'new working class', he opts to examine the development of the entire working class, concentrating on its objective structure, and expressly ruling out any consideration of the 'subjective' aspects of class: 'This is a book about the working class as a class in itself, not as a class for itself." In defending this self-imposed limitation, Braverman correctly castigates all those sociologists, 'Marxian' and otherwise, who find it impossible to see class defined in any other manner than subjectively, by its members. However, he seems unaware of the genuine problems which this limitation in fact engenders. As will be seen below with his discussion of the 'middle layers', in some areas it becomes difficult—not to say inadvisable—tc rigidly separate consideration of 'objective' and 'subjective' aspects.

In order to examine the evolution of labour-processes within occupations and the shifts of labour among occupations, Braverman is forced to undertake what becomes 'a study of the development of the capitalism mode of production over the past hundred years'. This project determines the structure of his book. In the first two sections, the author charts the development of management and of mechanizatios respectively. In Part Three, he elaborates the specific importance of these two developments in constituting monopoly capitalism; he then proceeds to examine the interrelation between these developments and changes in the structure of the corporation, the structure of the market and the growth of the state, and advances an analysis of the way these forces have led to changes in the structure of capital, which in their turn have generated changes in the structure of the working class. Part Fou studies the specific features of the new groups of workers produced by these processes, particularly clerical and service workers. In the fifth anfinal section, Braverman describes the overall structure of the Americaworking class in the light of the preceding analysis; isolates the specifi characteristics of the 'middle layers', who combine aspects o management and proletariat; and adds some afterthoughts on productiv

⁷ Braverman, op. cit, p. 27

I. Labour and Management

Braverman begins by evoking the potential unity of the functions of conception and execution in human labour-power; then traces the dissolution of such unity, as the labour-process is progressively appropriated by capital. With the end of 'putting-out' and the development of the factory system, capital institutionalized something it had not previously had: direct control over the labour-process. This is the crucial turning-point from which Braverman dates the origins of modern management. He shows that control is not a benefit to capital simply by virtue of being control in the coercive sense of the term. It is this direct control which is indispensable in the subsequent application of the detailed division of labour to the manufacture and machino-facture systems, and Braverman makes the gains in labour productivity obtained from this very clear by describing the division of labour in terms of the Babbage principle. This whole first part of the book is basically a reworking in simple language of key passages from Capital Volume I, with frequent pauses to demolish the wide variety of bourgeois myths that have been formulated to disguise from the working class the greater exploitation to which these processes have given rise. It is in this vein that the author approaches the central theme of the section, the analysis of Taylorism.

The development of Taylor's theory and practice is recounted in great detail, and the fundamental principles of his system isolated: first, the labour-process is to be rendered independent of craft, tradition and the workers' knowledge; secondly, all mental work is to be removed from the workshop and re-sited in planning and layout departments. In short, Taylor called for the separation of conception and execution, and the appropriation of the former by management: in Braverman's words, an 'explicit verbalization of the capitalist mode of production'—the science of controlling alienated labour. One of the most important consequences of the development of 'Scientific Management', as Taylorism was called, is that a 'paper replica' of the physical production process is generated by the rapidly multiplying activities of planning, record-keeping and all the various administrative procedures involved in the conception function of a large collective labour-process. These processes become a labourprocess in themselves, and consequently scientific management is applied to them also. Braverman returns to this in his later analysis of office workers.

It is a myth accepted by many that Taylorism, with its brashness and its insensitivity to capitalism's need for ideological fig-leaves, was a

These two forms of control over the labour process are described by Marx as 'formal and real subordination' in the 'Results of the Immediate Process of Production' (Capital, Vol. 1. Pelican/NLR edition, London 1976). Braverman may not have had access to this material when he wrote his book.

Braverman is presumably using the term 'mode of production' to refer to the technique of production rather than to capitalism itself.

mstoricany thusient phenomenon, now replaced by more sophisticated methods of management. Braverman, however, demonstrates that these 'more sophisticated' methods-Human Relations School, Industrial Psychology, and so on and so forth—are precisely fig-leaves which cover up the continuing application and institutionalization of Taylorist principles. Using the example of the first 'automated' car factory, that of Ford, he shows that the battle waged by capital to 'habituate' the working class to the new organization of work passed through its initial phases fairly rapidly. If we are less concious of Taylorism today, it is because we take it more for granted. Yet Braverman's insistence on this point also leads to a weakness in his argument. The conviction that Taylorist principles are a fundamental requirement for capital in its organization of the labour-process, and thus cannot be revoked in any significant way under capitalism, leads him to dismiss 'job-enlargement' schemes as having any particular novelty. But this is in fact to mis-estimate the genuine room for manoeuvre which exists in the method of control exercised by capital. For example, by recombining fragmented operations in a complex production process, capital can achieve not just the ideological advantage of claiming to have 'enlarged' jobs, but also a real economic benefit resulting from more efficient line-balancing.10

The main theme which emerges from this first section, then, is the contrast between the labour-process characteristic of capitalism's early phases of development and that of contemporary capitalism. In the early stages (during the institution of formal subordination), the craftsman still unites in himself (at least in part) the production process itself end the scientific knowledge which is coterminous with that process. In the later stages (the institution of real subordination), the worker comes more and more to be simply the receptacle of abstract labour, while the growth of science is a phenomenon whose processes and products are concentrated in the hands of capital.

2. Science and Mechanization

It is a central theme of Braverman's book that the development o scientific management described in Part One was a process which interpenetrated at every moment with the 'scientific and technological revolution'; and that these two processes together played integral parts it constituting monopoly capitalism as a distinct phase in the progress of the capitalist mode of production. Now, it is certainly true that there was radical change in the relationship of organized science and technology to the production process, which was both contemporaneous an articulated with the development of scientific management discussed in Part One. However, Braverman's description of this process in Part Two is vague and inadequate. In his account, towards the end of the nineteent century the technical possibilities of the Industrial Revolution began to approach exhaustion; the scientific and technological revolution-particularly centred on such developments as electricity, the intermation of engine, steel-making processes, and coal--and petroleum

This point is discussed in full in Coombs and Green, "The Labour Process and the Struggle for Socialism" (paper to the csn conference 1976); and in Priedman, "Responsib Autonomy versus Direct Control over the Labour Process", Capital and Class, No. 1 (1976).

day.

Braverman's listing of the key innovations of the turn of the century is, of course, correct; no economic historian, of whatever complexion, would have much to argue with in it. But to claim that these innovations represent simply part of an uninterrupted 'revolution' lasting nearly a century is less than useful. Braverman arrives at this position by overemphasizing one aspect of the process he is describing. He correctly points out the economic and institutional factors which have consolidated the appropriation of science by capital; but then deduces from this that the innovative process is so completely controlled and generalized that it no longer makes any sense to search for 'key' innovations at particular periods in the trend of capitalist development. He arrives at this position by examining the question of technological development only from the angles of its effect on the labour-process, and the incorporation of science; and omitting the question of its articulation with accumulation and particularly with the cycle of fixed capital renewal. This latter point has been the subject of much discussion, from Kondratiev, through Schumpeter to Mandel; and controversial as 'longwave' theories may be, it does seem to be empirically the case that there have been two distinct phases of technological development in the period under discussion. It is, therefore, unfortunate that Braverman attempts to solve this problem by abolishing it. This failure is in fact characteristic of the book as a whole; for Braverman is at his weakest when discussing broader economic questions.

He is, however, at his strongest when dealing with the more specific and detailed issues of the labour-process and the position of the worker in relation to it. He spends several pages here describing in detail the companion and corollary of Taylorism, Time and Motion study; and his revealing introduction to the technical finesse of this 'science' is a classic example of Braverman's intimate knowledge of work. Rejecting the conventional prejudice among Marxists that the technical aspects of machinery should be left to engineers and empiricists, Braverman correctly insists that machinery should be subjected to a social as well as a technical analysis. He calls for, and makes a contribution to, a taxonomy and morphology of machinery, since this is a pre-requisite for an informed discussion of the forces generating and generated by technical change.11 In a detailed discussion of numerically controlled machine tools, Braverman shows how this morphology of automation is in part generated by the need of capital to retain and intensify its direct control of the production process, and how under different circumstances the same machinery could be utilized and redesigned in such a way as to eliminate the de-skilling inherent in the capitalist application of it. This example is

¹¹ Furthermore, it is necessary for the working class to be able to extend its knowledge of the social stock of machinery—its potential and its openness or otherwise to modification—in order to be better able to put this to its own use in workers' control situations and in the socialist organization of production. The basis for Braverman's analysis of automation is the work of James Bright (Astenation and Management, Harvard 1978), but this work, though useful, has since been superseded by that of Martin Bell (Changing Technology and Management Requirements in the Engineering Industry, 1980 1972).

3. Monopoly Capital

As I have already pointed out, Braverman presents capital's achievement of direct control over the labour-process and appropriation of science as fundamental features of the development of monopoly capitalism. In the second half of his book, he is more concerned with shifts of capital and labour between industries than with occupational shifts within industries, so he spends some time in Part Three discussing the features of monopoly capitalism which have given rise to these industrial shifts. However, here precisely his weakness at the level of general economic analysis emerges clearly. Braverman concentrates on what he sees as the three most important developments in monopoly capitalism giving rise to capital movements between branches of production: the changed structure of the modern corporation; the universalization of market relations; and the growth of the economic activity of the state. Much of what he says on these topics is conventional, and to be fair to Braverman they are enormous subjects about which a considerable literature exists (particularly the first and third of them). His treatment nevertheless suffers from several deficiencies. The first is his relatively uncritical acceptance of the framework of Baran and Sweezy's Monopoly Capital (apart from their concept of surplus) for his economic analysis, with little direct reference to or discussion of the many criticisms which have been made of that work since its publication. 12 Secondly, he provides no assessment of the situation of us capitalism in relation to the world economy, and how this may have contributed specific features to the issues under discussion. Finally, the entire section is couched in imprecise and predominantly qualitative terms.

The most successful aspect of Part Three is Braverman's treatment of the modern corporation. Here he discusses in concrete terms the historica development and devolution of the managerial functions of control administration, marketing, etc. These functions have in large measure become labour-processes in themselves, exercised by a polarized spectrum of workers, on behalf of the capitalist. These workers are the subject of analysis in later chapters; but it is a great merit of Braverman'. overall approach that, in the first sections of the book, he traces the historical, technical and functional conditions of their development a recognizable groups—thus furnishing some material basis for subsequently discussing the fraught question of their class position. He chapters on the universalization of the market and the State are les successful, however, and add little to the main argument. This thir-

¹⁸ It also betrays some weaknesses in Braverman's analysis. The most important of these at his incipient craft nostalgia in response to de-skilling, and his overestimation of the powerless ness of the working class in the face of such developments. These points are discussed below ²⁸ e.g. James O'Connor, 'Monopoly Capital', NLR 40; Michael Lebowitz, 'Monopol Capital', Studies on the Laft, September/October 1966; Ernest Mandel, 'Surplus-value an realization of surplus-value', International Societist Review, January/February 1967 and "Th Labour theory of value and "Monopoly Capital", International Socialist Rever, July/Augu 1967.

obliged to pass, between his account of changes in the labour-process and his study of transformations in the groups of workers involved in those changes.

4. Growth Occupations

Part Four of Labour and Monopoly Capital contains a lengthy analysis of clerical workers and a much shorter discussion of service and retail workers. In the case of the former, Braverman first demonstrates the fundamental discontinuity between the clerks of the last century and those of contemporary capitalism. The clerk of the nineteenth century was the clerk of the firm, personal assistant to the proprietor, bookkeeper, even prospective son-in-law. Now, the proportion of clerks in the working population has risen from 3 per cent at the turn of the century to 18 per cent; from being almost entirely a male preserve the occupation has become a predominantly female one; and from being a relatively highly paid job it has sunk to being one of the lowest paid. Furthermore, as Braverman goes on to show in great detail, the job has changed from a relatively homogeneous, professional and almost craft occupation to a highly differentiated, de-skilled and rigorously controlled labourprocess, which resembles the régime of the factory floor more than it does the situation of the clerk's distant ancestor. As was done for shop-floor work, a meticulous scrutiny is made of the 'time and motion study' procedures instituted by office management consultants, to obtain the maximum surplus labour and productivity from these workers. Braverman argues that the functional position of clerical workers is that of agents in a labour process which has been developed to carry out what was in earlier stages the personal activity of the capitalist. The core of this activity is the monitoring of the physical production process, with the specific objective of controlling the flow of value between different capitals—the realization process. This line of thought, however, is unfortunately not developed further.

The brief discussion of service and retail workers which follows is in the same vein. Drawing on the analysis of the expansion of the service sector conducted earlier, it focuses on establishing that these workers participate in a labour-process which, though more intransigent to capital than clerical work, is nevertheless subject to the same basic constraints, and confers a similar condition on those engaged in it.

5. The Working Class

In this final section, Braverman draws together and seeks to synthesize the consequences of his preceding arguments. First, in a key chapter, by manipulation of us census data he summarizes the broad trends of working-class growth and internal differentiation in statistical form (see Table 1). Since the beginning of this century, the three most rapidly growing occupational categories have been operatives, clerical workers and service workers. However, since 1950 only the latter two of these categories have continued to grow rapidly, while operatives have begun

Workers (in millions) 1900–1970									
***					1940	1950	1960	1970	
Operatives and labourers	7.3	99	115	13.0	14.4	15.5	16.4	18.1	
Craftsmen	2.9	40	50	5 7	5.6	7.3	8 0	9 5	
Clencal workers	9	1.0	3-4	4 3	50	7.1	9.6	143	
Service and sales workers	3.6	4.9	4 9	7.3	8 8	8 7	10.6	13.4	
Total workers	147	20.8	24.8	30.3	33. 8	38.6	44.6	55- 3	
Total 'active' or 'experienced labour force' (in millions)	29 •	37.3	42.2	48.7	517	17· 9	64 5	80.0	
Workers as percentage of total 'labour force'	50.7	55.8	18.8	62.2	65.4	66.7	69.1	69.:	

SOURCE Labour and Monopoly Capital, p. 379

to decline as a percentage of the labour force. 14 Braverman discusses the consequences of these occupational shifts for the structure of the reserve army. He argues that the low wages of workers in the clerical and service sectors, relative to those in the manufacturing sectors, reflects the enormous size of the reserve army which is in some sense specific to these occupations. The two main components of this reserve army are the increasing labour-force participation rate of women, and the repulsion of labour from the manufacturing sector as a result of mechanization. Finally, this particular chapter is rounded off with a statistical tour de force on the question of unemployment and underemployment. This must be the most accomplished demystification to date of 'official' unemployment statistics; in Braverman's hands, it becomes a reassertion of the contemporary validity of those passages in Marx which describe the accumulation of wealth and misery as the two poles of society which develops progressively with the accumulation of capital.

Having discussed the 'two thirds to three quarters' of the population who constitute the proletariat, Braverman devotes a separate chapter to the 15 to 20 per cent he sees as constituting the 'middle layers' of employment. These embrace the engineering, technical and scientific cadre; the lower ranks of supervision and management; 'professional' employees occupied in marketing, financial and organizational administration, as well as in hospitals, schools and government administration. These people sell their labour-power, yet by Braverman's earlier cited rule-of-thumb they do not belong to the 'genuine' working class. Braverman extricates himself from this problem by noting that the new 'middle layers', unlike the old petty bourgeoisie, are constituted within the dominant class polarization of society rather than existing partially exterior to it. Thus they are subject to the pressures of class polarization which form their environment. Braverman proceeds to contrast the extremes of variation possible within the 'middle layers', concluding: 'but between these two extremes there is a range of intermediate categories, sharing the

¹⁴ Biaverman assigns this latter phenomenon to the effects of the scientific and technological revolution 'percoliting through' to the level of the employment figures. In doing so however, he again reveals the unsatisfactory nature of his concept of scientific and technological revolution, it is nonsense to argue that the sense revolution which was a party to the generation of an mersuring percentage of operatives in the first half of the centursuddenly became the cause of a decreasing percentage of operatives after 1950. It make much more sense to interpret these two phases in the development of the 'operatives category in terms of (at least in part) two distinct changes in production technology (se Ernest Mandel, Late Capitalism, London 1975, chapters 4 and 6.

a street the are argument, the true and any are are so was the continuous varying degrees. The gradations of position in the line of management may be seen chiefly in terms of authority, while gradations in staff positions are indicated by the levels of technical expertise. Since the authority and expertise of the middle ranks in the capitalist corporation represent an unavoidable delegation of responsibility, the position of such functionaries may best be judged by their relation to the power and wealth that commands them from above, and to the mass of labour beneath them which they in their turn help to control, command and organize. 115 So these middle layers are for Braverman not a homogeneous bloc, but a paradoxical unity of potentially divergent strata. But he is too cautious to predict how far and at what rate this divergence will proceed. He draws an analogy with the attempt of pre-First World War Marxists to 'define' the class position of clerical workers, and argues that it foundered by virtue of its static approach to a dynamic process. One suspects, however, that although he is hedging his bets, he expects the middle layers to experience a similar progressive transformation to that described above in the case of clerical workers.

In a separate and rather unconnected chapter, Braverman takes up the question of productive and unproductive labour. His view is that the considerable transformation of unproductive into productive labour during the development of capitalism means that the analytic problem must be differently posed today than it was in the classic discussions of Smith, Ricardo and Marx. His own treatment of this new problem, however, focuses almost exclusively on the question of whether the productive/unproductive distinction is relevant to class analysis, and does not enter the minefield of discussions on the macro-economic significance of the distinction. In reality, the two spheres of significance of the problem cannot be so lightly separated; but to pursue this argument would carry us beyond the limits of this review. Accepting, therefore, Braverman's restriction of the field of discussion, we find him expressing forcibly the view that the productive/unproductive distinction is of no use at all in distinguishing working class from non-working class.

The essence of the argument is as follows. The growth over this century of clerical and service work is partly a result of the engagement of a large labour force in the realization and circulation processes—classically unproductive. But at the same time the division of labour in these fields, the fragmentation and subsequent recombination of functions in individual departments and workers, has meant that the boundary between productive and unproductive labour has ceased to have any degree of coincidence with the boundaries between recognizable social groups, let alone classes. For example, in the same office there will be workers whose jobs have been subject to all the rationalization and degrading described earlier, and who participate to varying extents in activities of many kinds, some productive and some unproductive (e.g. realization and transportation). Clearly this kind of analysis does not apply to all cases; much unproductive labour is concentrated in institutions which are intrinsically unproductive, and where there is therefore no productive labour to be combined with it. Here Braverman

¹⁸ Braverman, op. cit., p 405

is completely unaffected by whether it is unproductive or not (clearly the person who opens the mail has the same job whether in a factory or in an advertising agency).

In the last chapter, 'A Final Note on Skill', Braverman returns to the topic which is his real concern—the subtitle of the book—the degradation of work. He looks afresh at the claim, so widely propagated by sociologists of all hues, that the progress of mechanization results in an average upgrading of the skill of the working population. The two pillars sustaining this claim are 1. occupational shifts out of unskilled into more skilled jobs; 2. increased education for the whole workforce, as it increasingly has to interact in some way with more advanced technology. Braverman attacks each of these pillars in turn.

To begin with, it seems that—in America at least—the evidence suggesting that there has been an increase in average skill has simply been created by changes in the method of classification used in official statistics. In place of the old (pre-1930) categories of labourer and craftsman, an intermediate category of 'operatives' has been retrospectively created, embracing all those whose job is in some way connected with a machine. These workers are deemed 'semi-skilled' and thus the process of mechanization, even if it begets only machine-minders, automatically increases the average skill of the workforce according to this classification. What does 'semi-skilled' mean? Simply that the worker receives on-the-job training, the duration of which varies from a few hours to possibly a month, but is on average no more than a few days. As Braverman points out, this use of the word 'skill', albeit with the prefix 'semi', is hardly historically continuous with the idea of skill taken from the craft jobs. Furthermore, in another statistical manipulation, service workers have been abstracted as a separate category. This new category is considered 'more skilled' than operatives, yet the workers who go to make up this classification were previously categorized as unskilled or semi-skilled. It seems, therefore that the pre-existing prejudice that any white-collar job was obviously more skilful than a blue-collar job, and that any job involving machiner was more skilful than a pure manual job, was mutually reinforcing with changes in methods of ordering the statistics relating to jobs. Thus the 'upgrading' of the skill of the workforce became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

At the same time, Braverman exposes the limited effect of the increase duration of education achieved in the United States (as elsewhere, thoug to a greater extent) in this century. In a devastating—if one-sided-analysis, he shows the way in which the educational system serves as mechanism for socializing children into urban capitalist society, for concealing unemployment, for shoring up the family structure and for excreting approximately the number of 'failures' to fill the various categories of working-class job.

The burden of this concluding chapter, then, is that the skill of the worke has been appropriated by technology and the worker been left wit something which is no longer skill, but merely dexterity. Furthermorthis supplanting of skill by dexterity is not confined to the kind of class

Braverman's Contribution: an Assessment

There are two fundamental issues brought into focus by Braverman's book which deserve closer attention, in assessing his contribution. The first of these is the class structure of contemporary capitalism: the various categories of workers, their functions, the arguments about whether they are part of the 'genuine' working class or not. The second issue is that of the overall state of the working class, its cohesion, collective power and future potential, under the impact of the development of contemporary capitalism with all its concomitant distortions.

Class Definition

The question of the class position of various 'problem' groups of workers is one which has occupied an increasing number of Marxist writers in recent years. Picking their way through the maze of proletarianization and *embourgeoisement* theories developed by sociologists studying 'white-collar' workers in the sixties, Marxists have provided a variety of answers to this question, ranging from one extreme of declaring that 'they will all be on the side of the proletariat when the day comes' to the opposite extreme of using such restrictive categories that everyone who is not either a manual productive worker or a bourgeois is a member of a 'new petty bourgeoisie'. By attempting to dissect the concrete development of labour-processes and by describing actual jobs, Braverman cuts through much of this discussion and attacks the question in a novel manner. This direction of analysis, however, has both fruitful and misleading consequences.

The most systematic and influential approach to this whole problem to date has been that initiated by Poulantzas, developed by Carchedi, and creatively criticized by Wright. The methodology of this school, however, is so different from that of Braverman that there is a danger of the two approaches being mechanically counterposed, or even of bypassing one another entirely without ever meeting. In fact, light is cast upon both if their interactions are forced into the open.

The essence of the difference between the two approaches is as follows. For Poulantzas, classes are structurally determined not only at the economic, but also at the political and ideological levels; and though the economic level is still granted its primacy, the entire thrust of Poulantzas's position is to emphasize the real and non-reflective character of the structural effects of the political and ideological levels. In Poulantzas's analysis, the three levels are rigorously separated and their respective effects systematically tabulated. Braverman, by contrast, uses no such analytical device. He does of course, have an *implicit* position

¹⁶ Nicos Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, London 1975, G. Carchedi, 'On the Economic Identification of the New Middle Class', Economy and Society, Vol. IV, No. 1, and 'Reproduction of Social Classes at the Level of Production Relations', Economy and Society, Vol. IV, No. 4, Erik Olin Wright, 'Class Boundaries in Advanced Capitalist Societies', Nilk 98

author himself pose the theoretical issue as a substantive topic worthy of discussion in its own right. What Braverman says, as we saw earlier, is that he intends to study the objective side of class, the class in itself, and not consciousness, action etc. Now this statement can be interpreted in two ways: either as a claim that, although the three levels—economic. political and ideological—do indeed exist, the latter two are purely confined to the subjective side of class and do not enter into its determination, which is purely economic; or alternatively as a rejection of any notion of 'levels' at all. That both interpretations are possible is due to a genuine ambiguity in Braverman's text. On the one hand, he has charted the historical conditions which have generated the economic and technical boundaries of existence of the various groups of workers. On the other hand, however, when it come to the question of actually defining their class position, he finds himself forced to introduce factors which are not purely economic or technical. Herein lies the fundamental indeterminacy of his analysis.

Probably the most satisfactory attempt to resolve these problems to date is that of Wright. Though the latter's methodology is greatly indebted to that of Poulantzas, it paradoxically in his hands yields results which are very close to those of Braverman. Wright and Braverman agree over the question of productive and unproductive labour—it cannot be used as a class boundary. Their allocation of occupational groups to the working class or otherwise is broadly similar, although Wright is more cautious and more rigorous. But perhaps the most interesting area of interaction between their respective positions is on the question of authority relations. A passage has already been quoted in which authority was introduced somewhat vaguely by Braverman in an attempt to differentiate the 'middle layers'. But in Braverman it is never clear exactly where authority resides—whether at the economic, political or ideological level—precisely because he does not operate with these concepts.

In Wright on the other hand, following Poulantzas and Balibar, authority is clearly conceptualized. In his framework, there are two components to relations of production at the economic level: relations of economic ownership (not to be confused with legal title); and relations of possession This latter relation is in turn subdivided into relations of possession o means of production and of labour-power—and it is from these tha authority relations are derived. The issue becomes concrete in the case o supervisory labour: Following Poulantzas, supervision can be conceived as the "direct reproduction, within the process of production itself, of th political relations between the capitalist class and the working class' Alternatively, supervision can be seen as one aspect of the structure dissociation between economic ownership and possession at th economic level itself. That is, possession, as an aspect of the ownership c the means of production, involves (to use Poulantzas's own formulation control over the labour process. In the development of monopol capitalism, possession has become dissociated from economic ownershit But equally, possession has become internally differentiated, so the control over the entire labour process (top managers) has becom separated from the immediate control of labour activity (supervision

Unices possession itself is to be considered an aspect of political relations, there is no reason to consider supervision a reflection of political relations within the social division of labour rather than a differentiated element of economic relations.'17

This formulation is far superior to that of Braverman even though both move in the same general direction. The difference is that, with this firm foundation, Wright can go on to attempt to specify degrees of relations of possession, whereas Braverman can only talk in terms of a vague undifferentiated continuum. Thus, in Wright's account, the importance of authority and supervisory powers can be tabulated for any occupational group. Braverman, on the other hand, discusses authority only in relation to the middle layers, but leaves the question aside when other groups (e.g. clerical workers) are concerned. But if Wright's account is so superior, why is it important to discuss Braverman at all? The answer is two-fold. First, the dissociation of economic ownership and possession which Wright speaks of is precisely due to the transition from formal to real subordination of the labour process: the process which Braverman has described in such detail. Secondly, Braverman has arrived at this result by concrete historical study, in rich contrast to the theoretical genesis of Wright's analysis. Therein lies the interest of the comparison.

The State of the Working Class

We can turn now to the second major issue posed by Braverman's book. It has been pointed out that a prominent feature of his whole discussion of the working class is his emphasis on the de-skilling and degradation of the labour-process. This is in fact symptomatic of a consistent emphasis which characterizes Labour and Monopoly Capital: this is the strong element of bumanism in Braverman's approach to the labour-process. Now this is, as such, by no means a criticism. Pass the Althusserians, humanism is an essential component of Marxism (what kind of humanism is another question, which cannot be debated here). Braverman's humanism is concentrated in a powerful and sustained exposure of the dehumanizing aspects of capitalism. His concentration on these aspects, however, almost to the total exclusion of more positive features of working-class development, leads to a certain one-sidedness in his analysis.

It cannot be denied that the general picture of the working class drawn by Braverman tends to offer a pessimistic view of recent developments. It presents a class whose members have progressively become receptacles of abstract labour, de-skilled, de-cultured, atomized, monitored and measured to one thousandth of a second at work, manipulated into consuming useless commodities at home. More and more their subjectivity has become dominated by capital, bringing them closef to the inanimate components of the labour-process. Now all of these things are true, in a certain sense, and it is the business of Marxists to expose and denounce them as Braverman has. But Braverman does something quite

¹⁷ Wright, op cit., pp. 19-20.

umerênt as wên, winch is to put them at the centre of his substantive analysis.

The problem can best be posed in terms of the productive forces. The overall processes Braverman describes can be seen at the most general level as components of the increasing objective socialization of labour which occurs with the development of the productive forces under capitalist relations of production. Now the development of the productive forces under capitalism is a process which Marxists see as doubleedged. This is not simply a chronological effect, first developing and then fettering; the process has another aspect. The capitalist relations of production which interpenetrate with the productive forces impose a certain pattern on the latter; and the negative features of the working class which preoccupy Braverman are in part the results of the pattern. Simultaneously, these same relations of production create a working class which, as the degree of labour productivity increases, becomes a progressively more coherent and powerful collective labourer, measured in terms of its objective ability to shoulder the task of organizing the administration of the entirety of society under new social relations.

The increased potential of the production process, its increasing complexity which renders it more susceptible to disruption by working-class action, and the progressive proletarianization of some of those who possess the technical knowledge to control it—all of these things objectively increase the collective power of the working class, despite the political obstacles to implementation of that power. The whole political balance-sheet of the last decade points in this direction, despite the peculiar channels in which the process is exhibited and the distortions to which it is subject. Yet there is hardly a mention in Braverman's book of the role of working-class resistance to the processes he describes; no mention even of the trade unions, who have always taken up positions or such things as industrial engineering, new technologies, job descriptions. skill differentials. In short, Braverman seems to perceive none of the positive aspects for the working class of the tremendous development o. productive forces which has taken place in this century. This is one half of the basic contradiction in the capitalist mode of production, just as much as the other, negative half which Braverman has emphasized.

Thus by examining the consequences of a particular type of humanis approach for Braverman's analysis, we arrive at what is in fact a mor fundamental criticism, namely the relative absence of the role of clas struggle in determining the processes which he analyses. Furthermor there is little doubt that this deficiency derives in large part from the fact that, although as was mentioned earlier Braverman's concentration of the industrial working class and acknowledgement of its revolutionar role does represent a substantive departure from Baran and Sweezy, be nevertheless remains fundamentally in their debt for his entire economic framework, which he takes over bodily with all its defects from Mostopo Capital. The essence of the mistake made by Braverman in this respect to imply that the domination of labour by capital within the labour process is virtually complete.

I diamonically, however, and omit offic or praefinance on the role of class struggle leads to him taking some rather ultra-left positions. Nowhere does this come out more clearly than in his repudiation of any form of workers' control which is simply 'factory balloting', and which does not restore to the workers the technical knowledge appropriated from them in the process of de-skilling and objectified in technology and experts.18 Now it is true that 'full' workers' control does imply the restoration of these losses (albeit in new form). Nevertheless, it would be a tremendous gain if even 'incompletely informed' workers had the right and the power to veto changes which were against their interests, whether originating from engineers, managers or party bosses. Braverman's position represents an incorrect reduction of social control over means of production to technical knowledge of the production process. In fact, on the basis of the same technique, it is possible to have a variety of social relations of production, and a variation in power or lack of power of the producers over their conditions of production. Furthermore, this potential for workers' control has been increased rather than decreased by the development of capitalism. However, it remains, of course, true that strategies for re-appropriation of the technical knowledge of the production process are urgently needed components of the practice of workers' control struggles.

Despite these criticisms, the overall evaluation of Braverman's book must be decidedly positive. He has written with great force and clarity on a topic which has been either neglected or wrongly assessed by most contemporary Marxists, and in so doing has opened new areas of discussion and posed new problems. For instance, by concentrating on the labour process, Braverman has revealed a particular dimension of the development of technology and of the forces of production in general. There exists, however, another more traditional mode of analysis of these same developments, in terms of cycles of capital accumulation and changing organic composition of capital. The links between the two approaches should provide a fruitful field for research. The most original outcome might take the form of flesh to put on such skeletal concepts as 'capital's appropriation of science' or 'science as a direct productive force', providing a welcome antidote to the incipient sterility of current science/ideology debates.

Another perhaps more fundamental problem posed by Braverman's contribution has been hinted at earlier: the need for a component within revolutionary political practice which addresses itself to the forces as well as to the relations of production. Clearly, it is not possible in fact to challenge the nature of the forces of production without also challenging the relations of production, since they are co-determining entities; hence such a component could not be totally independent. However, it is precisely because of this co-determination, which distorts the productive forces, that socialists must extend this component of their political practice. Such a notion is, of course, not absent from the history of practical working-class struggles past or present; but it is absent from most formulations of a Marxist programme, as was pointed out earlier,

Braverman, op. cit., p. 445, n.

picusciy pecause of the matorical legacy of the occount and runta Internationals.

Labour and Monopoly Capital 18 valuable 28 much for its potential 28 2 stimulus to these future debates as for its substantive content. Moreover, as such a stimulus, it possesses one asset which marks it off from all other recent works of Markist political economy. Braverman's book is a political work, written in such a way that it can, and should, be read by workermilitants as well as by Marxist theorists. Marxists should do all in their power to assist this process, since they can only benefit from it.

Acknowledgement

The article by Étienne Ballbar first appeared in La Nouvelle Critique, December 1976, and translated here with thanks.

08 new left review

ELMEEN CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

van Meszaros Dictatorship and Dissent

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alter Benjamin On Surrealism

cos Mouzelis The Greek Elections

dre Gunder Frank Currents in Eurocommunism

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	Prices and subscription rates	See inside back cover				

The last decade has seen a historic defeat for US power in Vietnam and, nore recently, serious reverses for it in Africa; continuing threats to jureaucratic order in East Europe and China; and a much higher level of lass struggle in the advanced capitalist countries, especially but not only hose of southern Europe, than in the preceding two decades. At the same ime, the world capitalist economy is still enmired in the crisis which it ntered in 1973. And yet, despite all this, there has been a significant ightward shift at the ideological level in the most recent period: a flight rom Marxism on the part of certain layers of the 'generation of '68', and a rogressive rightward drift of most social-democratic and Communist arties. What explains this? There is, of course, no single cause. But one entral factor is what may be termed a crisis of the prevailing models of ocialism-which is in turn related to the cumulative evidence of the epressive and reactionary character of régimes which proclaim themselves be socialist. In particular, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia brutally ashed the hopes aroused—not just in the Communist parties themselves y the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and Khruschev's 'destalinization' olicies. And a different set of illusions were dispelled when, on the other ide of the globe, the sorry conclusion of the Chinese Cultural Revolution ade manifest the true nature and limitations of Maoism, in the succession f purges and the obdurately pro-imperialist foreign policies which have ollowed. A scrupulously honest and scientific analysis of the societies reated in the name of socialism to date, and the projection of a model of xialism based upon an integral proletarian democracy, alone will permit a effective response to the rightist onslaught.

the present issue, two contrasting articles are concerned with this set of toblems. First, István Mészáros, a pupil of Lukács before leaving lungary in 1956 and author of several books on Marxist philosophy, writes a the nature of political power in societies where capitalism has been verthrown. Taking as his starting-point Marx's formulation of the aim of roletarian revolution as a society in which there will be no more political ower as such, Mészáros examines the contradictions which necessarily caracterize the period of dictatorship of the proletariat if this aim is accepted. After a critical account of Lenin's approach to these intradictions before the October Revolution, and of the way in which they rerwhelmed him in the last period of his life, Mészáros argues that it was akács who—as early as 1919—discerned the true dimensions of the oblem. Establishing a clear distinction between the material conditions at underpin political structures in a bourgeois democracy and in a post-

contradiction in the survival of a social hierarchy of labour—in par inevitable, given conditions of scarcity. In conclusion, Mészáros sees a inseparable interconnection between the continued rule of capital (ever where capitalism no longer exists), the problems of centralized planning and the struggle for political freedom.

In the second place, Ernest Mandel, in a lengthy interview on the fortiet anniversary of 'The Revolution Betrayed', sets out to measure Trotsky' analysis against Soviet reality today. Demonstrating the superficiality c those interpretations of the Soviet state which subsume it under th categories of socialism or capitalism, or which view it as a class society of new and indefinable type, Mandel for his own part emphasizes it essentially transitional character. He further stresses that the particula features of that society are to be understood as the product of a specifi history, rather than as typical of any transition from capitalism to socialism Discussing the nature of bureaucratic rule in the USSR today and its socia basis in the working class, Mandel confronts the difficult problem (whether that country can realistically be termed a 'workers' state' (albeit degenerate one). Finally, in the interests of a reappropriation of politica power by the associated producers, Mandel seeks to distinguish betwee on the one hand disputes that are purely terminological, and on the othe hand real differences among Marxists over interpretation of contradictor aspects of Soviet reality and over the political conclusions to be drawn.

In an article which forms a sequel to his analysis of post-war Greece in NL 96, Nicos Mouzelis here studies the context and outcome of the Gree general elections of November 1977. After a meticulous account of what th results reveal about the dynamic of class forces, and in particular after advancing an explanation for the success of the Moscow-oriente Communist Party and the failure of the Eurocommunist Party of tl Interior, Mouzelis concentrates on the most striking single feature of the elections: the advance of PASOK, the party led by Andreas Papandreo Although this party clearly shares some common features with, for instance, the Spanish or Chilean Socialist parties, Mouzelis argues that th relevant pole of comparison is rather populism—whether of the inter-w Balkan or the contemporary Latin American variety. NLR 108 also h Walter Benjamin's characteristically unexpected and pungent commen on Surrealism, taken from a new collection 'Reflections' whose UK edition will be published by NLB this autumn; and a discussion piece in which Francis Mulhern looks at some of the major problems raised by Ter Eagleton's recent 'Criticism and Ideology'.

Political Power and Dissent in Post-revolutionary Societies

The question of political power in post-revolutionary societies is and remains one of the most neglected areas of Marxist theory.* Marx formulated the principle of he abolition of 'political power properly so-called' in no uncertain terms: 'The organization of revolutionary elements as a class supposes the existence of all the productive forces which could be engendered in the bosom of the old society. Does this mean that after the fall of the old society there will be a new class domination culminating in a new political power? No. The condition for the mancipation of the working class is the abolition of every class, just as the ondition for the liberation of the Third Estate, of the bourgeois order, was the bolition of all estates and all orders. The working class, in the course of its evelopment, will substitute for the old civil society an association which will aclude classes and their antagonisms, and there will be no more political power roperly so-called, since political power is precisely the official expression of ntagonism in civil society.' And he was categorical in asserting that 'When the roletariat is victorious, it by no means becomes the absolute side of society, for it

But what happens to political power in post-revolutionary societies when the proletariat does not disappear? What becomes of private property or capital when private ownership of the means of production is abolished while the proletariat continues to exist and rules the whole of society—including itself—under the new political power called 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'? For according to Marx's principle the two sides of the opposition stand or fall together, and the proletariat cannot be truly victorious without abolishing itself. Nor can it fully abolish its opposite without at the same time abolishing itself as a class which needs the new political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to secure and maintain itself in power.

It would be mere sophistry to try and get out of these difficulties by suggesting that the new political power is not 'political power properly so-called', in other words that it is not the manifestation of deep-seated objective antagonisms. For the existence of such antagonisms is painfully in evidence everywhere, and the severity of measures devised to prevent their eruption-by no means with guaranteed success-provides an eloquent refutation of all evasive sophistry. Nor is it possible to take seriously for a moment the self-justifying suggestion that the political power of the post-revolutionary state is maintained—indeed intensified—in function of a purely international determination, in that political repression is explained as the necessary consequence of 'encirclement' and as the only feasible form of defending the achievements of the revolution against external aggression and its complementary: internal subversion. As recent history loudly testifies, 'the enemy within and without' as the explanation of the nature of political power in postrevolutionary societies is a dangerous doctrine, which substitutes the part for the whole in order to transform a partial determination into wholesale a priori justification of the unjustifiable: the institutionalized violation of elementary socialist rights and values.

The task is, clearly, an investigation—without apologetic preconceptions—of the specific political antagonisms which come to the fore in post-revolutionary societies, together with their material base indirectly identified by Marx's principle concerning the simultaneous abolition of both sides of the old socio-economic antagonism as the necessary condition of proletarian victory. This does not mean, in the least, that we have to commit ourselves in advance to some theory of a 'new class'. For postulating a 'new class' is only another type of preconception which does not explain anything—which, on the contrary badly needs explanation itself. Nor does the magic umbrella term 'bureaucratism'—which covers almost everything, including the assessment of qualitatively different social systems approached from

¹ The Poerty of Philosophy, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Collected Works, Vol. (London 1976, pp. 211-12 (emphasis added)

^{*} The present article is an extended version of an intervention at the Counges bid Manifesto o 'Power and Opposition in Post-revolutionary Societies', held in Venice on 11-1 November 1977.

² The Holy Family, in Marx and Engels, Collected Works, Vol. 4, London 1975, p. 3 (emphasis added).

provide a meaningful explanation of the nature of political power in post-revolutionary societies, in that it merely points to some obvious appearances while begging the question as to their causes: i.e. it presents the effect of far-reaching causal determinations as itself a causal explanation. Similarly, the hypothesis of 'state capitalism' will not do. Not only because it confounds the issues with some present-day tendencies of development in the most advanced capitalist societies (tendencies very briefly touched upon already by Marx himself), but also because it has to omit from its analysis some highly significant objective characteristics of post-revolutionary societies in order to make the application of this problematic label look plausible. Labels, no matter how tempting, do not solve complex theoretical issues, only bypass them while giving the illusion of a solution.

By the same token, it would be somewhat naive to imagine that we can leave these problems behind by declaring that the dictatorship of the proletariat as a political form belongs to the past, whereas the present and future are to be envisaged according to the principle of political pluralism—which, in turn, necessarily implies a conception of shared power as a 'historical compromise'. For even if we accept the pragmatic viability and relative historical validity of this conception, the question of how to constitute and exercise political power which actively contributes to a socialist transformation of society, instead of postponing indefinitely its realization, remains just as unanswered as before. There are some worrying dilemmas which must be answered. In the framework of the newly envisaged pluralism, is it possible to escape the well-known historical fate of Social Democracy, which resigned itself to the illusion of 'sharing power' with the bourgeoisie while in fact helping to perpetuate the rule of capital over society? If it is not possible—if, that is, the political form of pluralism itself is by its very nature a submission to the prevailing form of class domination, as some would argue—in that case why should committed socialists be interested in it in the slightest? But if. on the other hand, the idea of pluralism is advocated in the perspective of a genuine socialist transformation, it must be explained how it is possible to proceed from shared power to socialist power, without relapsing into the selfsame contradictions of political power in post-revolutionary societies whose manifestations we have witnessed on so many occasions. This is what gives a burning topicality to this whole discussion. The question of political power in post-revolutionary societies is no longer an academic matter. Nor can it be left anchored to the interests of conservative political propaganda and dismissed by the Left as such. Quite unlike 1956—when these contradictions erupted in such a clamorous and tragic form—it is no longer possible for any section of the Left to turn its shoulders to it. Facing the issues involved has become an essential. condition of advance for the entire working-class movement, under conditions when in some countries it may be called upon to assume the responsibilities of sharing power, in the midst of an ever-deepening structural crisis of capital

The Ideal and the 'Force of Circumstance'

If there has ever been a need to go back to the original sources and

together with all the necessary implications for present-day conditions and circumstances, it is precisely on these issues. But as soon as we admit this and try to act accordingly, we are immediately presented with some great difficulties. For Marx's original definition of political power as the necessary manifestation of class antagonism contrasts the realities of class society with fully realized socialism in which there can be no room for separate organs of political power, since 'the social life-process . . . becomes production by freely associated men, and stands under their conscious and planned control'. But try and replace the plan consciously arrived at by the totality of individual producers by a plan imposed upon them from above, then the concept of 'freely associated men' must also be thrown out and replaced by that of a forced association, inevitably envisaging the exercise of political power as separate from and opposed to the society of producers, who must be compelled to accept and implement aims and objectives which do not issue from their conscious deliberations but, on the contrary, negate the very idea of free association and conscious deliberation. Or, vice versa, try and obliterate the concept of 'freely associated individuals'-worse still, arbitrarily declare, in the spirit of whatever form of Stalinism, that such concepts are purely 'ideological' remnants of a 'moralizing bourgeois individualism', even if this means that from now on, however surreptitiously, a significant portion of Marx's own work too has to be obliterated with the same label—and there will be no way of conceiving and envisaging (let alone practising) the elaboration and implementation of social planning except 25 a forced imposition from above.

Thus we witness the complete transformation of Marx's ideal into a reality which replaces the self-determining life-activity of freely associated social individuals by the forced association of men ruled by an alien political force. Simultaneously, Marx's concept of a conscious social plan (which is supposed to regulate, through the full involvement of the freely associated individuals, the totality of the life-processes of society) suffers the gravest reduction, becoming a one-sided, technocratically preconceived and often unfulfilled mere sconomic plan, and thus superimposing upon society in a new form the selfsame economic determinations whose supersession constituted the framework of orientation of scientific socialism from the moment of its inception.

Furthermore, since now the two basic constituents of a dialectical unity, the association of producers and the regulatory force of the plan, are divorced from and opposed to one another, the 'force of circumstance'—which is the necessary consequence of this separation rather than its cause, whatever the historically changing social determinants at work—becomes the unqualified cause, indeed the 'inevitable cause'. And since the 'inevitable cause' is also its own justification, the transformation is carried even further, setting itself up as the only possible form of realization of Marr's ideal: as the unsurpassable model of all possible socialist development. From now on, since the prevailing form of political rule must be maintained and therefore everything must remain as it is, the problematical notion of the 'force of circumstance' is used in the

^{*} Capital, Penguin/NLR edition, Vol. 1, London 1976, p. 173 (emphasis added)

and thus it is right that everything should be as it is. In other words, Marx's ideal is turned into a highly problematical reality, which in its turn is reconverted into a totally untenable model and ideal, through a most tortuous use of the 'force of circumstance' as both inevitable cause and normative justification, while in fact it should be critically examined and challenged on both counts.

To be sure, this double perversion is not the product of one-sided theory, though it represents an apologetic capitulation of theory to the 'force of circumstance', which in its turn is brought into existence as a result of immensely complex and contradictory social determinations, including the share of theoretical failure as a significant contributory factor to the overall process. But once this process is accomplished and a uniform praise of the perverted ideal is imposed by the force of law, condemning as 'heresy' and 'subversion' all voices of dissent, critical reflection must assume the form of bitter, self-torturing irony. Such as the answer given by the mythical 'Radio Yerevan' to the question of an anonymous listener who asks: Is it true that we have socialism in our country?' The answer is given in an oblique form as follows: You are asking, Comrade, whether it is true that luxurious American motor cars will be given away this Saturday afternoon on Red Square. It is perfectly true, with three qualifications: they won't be American, they will be Russian; they won't be motor cars, they will be bicycles; and they won't be given away, they will be taken away.' Cynically nihilistic though this may sound, who can fail to perceive in it the voice of impotence protesting in vain against the systematic frustration and violation of the ideals of socialism? Admittedly, the problems of political power in post-revolutionary societies cannot be solved by simply reiterating an ideal in its original formulation, for by their very nature these problems belong to the period of transition which impose their painful qualifications on all of us. All the same, there is a moral for us too in the story of 'Radio Yerevan'. It is that we should never consent to 'qualifications' which obliterate the ideal itself and turn it into its opposite. To ignore the 'force of circumstance' would be tantamount to living in the world of fantasy. But whatever the circumstances, the ideal remains valid as the vital compass that secures the correct direction of the journey and as the necessary corrective to the power of vis major which tends to take over in the absence of such corrective.

Political Power in the Society of Transition

Is it possible to identify the necessary socio-historical qualifications which apply the spirit of Marx's original formulations to the concrete realities of a complex historical transition from one social formation to another? How is it possible to envisage this transition in a political form that does not become its own self-perpetuation, thus contradicting and effectively nullifying the very idea of a transition which alone can justify the continued, but in principle diminishing, importance of the political form? Is it possible to have such qualifications without liquidating Marx's theoretical framework and its implications for our problem?

As we have seen, Marx's original definition concerned political power as

the abolition of political power properly so-called in a fully realized socialist society. But what happens in between? Is it possible to break entrenched political power without necessarily resorting to the exercise of a fully articulated system of political power? If not, how is it possible to envisage a change of course 'halfway through'-namely, the radical transformation of a powerful system of self-sustaining political power which controls the whole of society, into a self-transcending organ which fully transfers the manifold functions of political control to the social body itself, thus enabling the emergence of that free association of men without which the life-process of society remains under the domination of alien forces, instead of being consciously regulated by the social individuals involved in accordance with the ideals of self-determination and self-realization? And finally, if the transitional forms of political power stubbornly refuse to show signs of 'withering away', how should one assess the contradictions involved: as the failure of a 'utopian' Marxism, or as the historically determinate manifestation of objective antagonisms whose elucidation is well within the compass of Marx's original project?

Marx's assertion about the supersession of political power in socialist society is coupled with two important considerations. First, that the free association of social individuals who consciously regulate their own life-activities in accordance with a settled plan is not feasible without the necessary 'material foundation, or a series of material conditions of existence, which in their turn are the natural and spontaneous product of a long and tormented historical development.' The emancipation of labour from the rule of capital is feasible only if the objective conditions of the emancipation are fulfilled whereby 'the direct, material production process is stripped of the form of penny and antithesis', giving way to the 'free development of individualities'. By implication, so long as 'penury and antithesis' remain characteristics of the material base of society, the political form must suffer their consequences and the 'free development of individualities' is hindered and postponed.

The second consideration is closely linked to the first. Since overcoming the conditions of 'penury and antithesis' necessarily implied the highes development of the forces of production, successful revolution had to be envisaged by Marx in advanced capitalist countries, and not on the periphery of world capitalist developments (although he touched upor the possibility of revolutions away from the socio-economically most dynamic centre, without however entering into a discussion of the necessary implications of such possibilities). Inasmuch as the object of his analysis was the power of capital as a world system, he had to contemplate a breakthrough, under the impact of a profound structural crisis, in the form of more or less simultaneous revolutions in the major capitalis countries.

As to the problems of political power in the period of transition, Mar introduced the concept of the 'dictatorship of the proletanat'; and in on

⁴ Ibid., (emphasis added).

Grandruss, London 1973, p. 706 (emphasis added)

himself to some additional problems of a transitional society as manifested in the politico-legal sphere. While these elements of his theory certainly do not constitute a system (the sequel to *Capital* which was supposed to develop the political implications of Marx's global theory in a systematic way was never even sketched, let alone fully worked out), they are important signposts and must be complemented by certain other elements of his theory (notably the assessment of the relationship between individual and class, and of the structural interdependence between capital and labour) which have a significant bearing on the strictly political issues, as we shall see in a moment.

It was Lenin, as we all know, who worked out the strategy of revolution 'at the weakest link of the chain', insisting that the dictatorship of the proletariat must be considered as the only viable political form for the entire historical period of transition that precedes the highest stage of communism, in which it finally becomes possible to implement the principle of freedom. The most significant shift in his analysis was envisaging that the 'material foundation' and the supersession of 'penury' will be accomplished under the dictatorship of the proletariat in a country which sets out from an extremely low level of development. Yet Lenin saw no problem in suggesting in December 1918 that the new state will be 'democratic for the proletariat and the propertyless in general and dictatorial against the bourgeoisie' only.6

There was a curious flaw in his usually impeccable reasoning. He argued that 'thanks to capitalism, the material apparatus of the hig banks, syndicates, railways, and so forth, has grown' and 'the immense experience of the advanced countries has accumulated a stock of engineering marvels, the employment of which is being hindered by capitalism', concluding that the Bolsheviks (who were in fact confined to a backward country) can 'lay hold of this apparatus and set it in motion'. Thus the immense difficulties of a transition from one particular revolution to the irrevocable success of a global revolution (which is beyond the control of any one particular agency, however class-conscious and disciplined) were more or less implicitly brushed aside by voluntaristically postulating that the Bolsheviks were capable of taking power and 'retaining it until the triumph of the world socialist revolution'.

Thus, while the viability of a socialist revolution at the weakest link of the chain was advocated, the imperative of a world revolution as a condition of success of the former reasserted itself in a most uneasy form: as an insoluble tension at the very heart of the theory. But what could one say in the event the world socialist revolution did not come about and the Bolsheviks were condemned to hold on to power indefinitely? Lenin and his revolutionary comrades were unwilling to entertain that question, since it conflicted with certain elements of their outlook. They had to claim the viability of their strategy in a form which necessarily implied

⁶ In a section added to the second edition of *The State and Revolution*, see *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 412 (emphasis added).

⁷ Ibid, Vol. 26, p. 130 (emphasis added)

Ibid.

had no control whatsoever. In other words, their strategy involved the contradiction between two imperatives: first, the need to go it alone, as the *immediats* (historical) pre-condition of success (of doing it at all); secondly, the imperative of the triumph of the world socialist revolution, as the *ultimate* (structural) precondition of success of the whole enterprise.

Understandably, therefore, when the actual conquest of power in October 1917 created a new situation, Lenin exclaimed with a sigh of relief: It is more pleasant and useful to go through the "experience of the revolution" than to write about it." And again: "The October 25 Revolution has transferred the question raised in this pamphlet from the sphere of theory to the sphere of practice. This question must now be answered by deeds, not words." But how deeds could themselves answer the dilemma concerning the grave difficulties of accomplishing all the necessary 'material groundwork' which constitutes the prerequisite of a successful socialist transformation, without 'words'—without, that is, a coherent theory soberly assessing the massive potential dangers involved, and indicating at the same time, if feasible, the possibilities of a solution to them—Lenin did not say. He simply could not envisage the possibility of an objective contradiction between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the proletariat itself.

While in March and April 1917 Lenin was still advocating 'a state without a standing army, without a police opposed to the people, without an officialdom placed above the people',11 and proposed to 'organize and arm all the poor, exploited sections of the population in order that they themselves should take the organs of state power directly into their own hands, in order that they themselves should constitute these organs of state power', 18 a significant shift became visible in his orientation after the seizure of power. The main themes of The State and Revolution receded further and further in his thought. Positive references to the experience of the Paris Commune (as the direct involvement of 'all the poor, exploited sections of the population' in the exercise of power) disappeared from his speeches and writings; and the accent was laid on 'the need for a central anthority, for dictatorship and a united will to ensure that the ranguard of the proletariat shall close its ranks, develop the state and place it upon a new footing, while firmly bolding the reigns of power'. 13 Thus, in contrast to the original intentions which predicated the fundamental identity of the 'entire armed people', 14 with state power, there appeared a separation of the latter from 'the working people', whereby 'state power is organizing largescale production on state-owned land and in state-owned enterprises on a national scale, is distributing labour-power among the various branches of economy and the various enterprises, and is distributing among the working people large quantities of articles of consumption belonging to the state'.15 The fact that the relationship of the working people to state

[•] Ibid., Vol. 25, p. 412

¹⁰ Ibid., Vol. 26, p. 89

¹¹ Ibid , Vol 24, p 49 (Lenin's emphasis)

¹² Ibid., Vol. 23, p. 326 (Lenin's emphasis)

¹⁸ Ibid , Vol. 30, p. 422 (emphasis added).

¹⁴ Ibid., Vol. 23, p. 325 (Lenin's emphasis)

¹⁵ Ibid, Vol 30, pp 108-109 (emphasis added).

relationship of structural subordination did not seem to trouble Lamin, who bypassed this issue by simply describing the new form of separate state power 28 'the proletarian state power'.16 Thus the objective contradiction between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the proletariat itself disappeared from his horizon, at the very moment it surfaced as centralized state power which determines on its own the distribution of labour-power. At the most generic level of class relations—corresponding to the polar opposition between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—the contradiction did not seem to exist. The new state had to secure its own material base and the central distribution of labour-power appeared to be the only viable principle for achieving this, from the standpoint of the state already in existence. 17 In reality, however, it was 'the working people' themselves who had to be reduced to and distributed as 'labour-power': not only over immense geographical distances—with all the upheavals and dislocations inevitably involved in such a centrally imposed system of distribution—but also 'vertically' in each and every locality, in accordance with both the material dictates of the inherited production structures and the political dictates inherent in their newly constituted principle and organs of regulation.

Lukács's Solution

No matter how problematical his conclusions, it was Lukács's great intellectual merit to have highlighted this dilemma in a most acute form, in one of his relatively unknown articles, written in the spring of 1919. The issue is important enough to warrant the long quotation which is needed to faithfully reproduce the train of his thought: It is clear that the most oppressive phenomena of proletarian power—namely, scarcity of goods and high prices, of whose immediate consequences every proletarian has personal experience—are the direct consequences of the

¹⁰ Ibid , p. 108.

¹⁷ The extent to which the newly constituted state organs were structurally conditioned by the old state should not be underestimated Lenin's analysis of this problem in his stocktaking speech on the NEP is most revealing. We took over the old machinery of state, and that was our misfortume. Very often this machinery operates against us. In 1917, after we seized power, the government officials subotaged us. This frightened us very much and we pleaded: "Please come back". They all came back but that was our unsfortum. We now have a vast army of government employees, but lack sufficiently educated forces to exercise real control over them. In practice it often happens that here at the top, where we exercise political power, the machine functions somehow; but down below government employees have arbitrary control and they often exercise it in such a way as to comiterest our measures. At the top, we have, I don't know how many, but at all events, I think, no more than a few thousand, at the outside several tens of thousands of our own people. Down below, however, there are hundreds of thousands of old officials whom we got from the Tsar and from bourgeois society and who, partly deliberately and partly unwittingly, work against us' (Collected werks, Vol 33, pp. 428-9, emphasis added.) The new state power was constituted and consolidated through such tensions and contradictions, which deeply affected its structural articulation at all levels. The old heritage, with its massive inertia, was a factor that weighed heavily on successive stages of Soviet development. Not only in the sense that 'state officialdom placed above the people' could counteract the 'good measures' taken at the top where political power was being exercised, but even more so in that this type of decisionmaking—a far cry from the originally advocated alternative described in State and Revolution, with reference to the principles of the Paris Commune turned itself into an ideal. From now on the problem was identified as the conscious or unwitting obstruction of state authority by local officials and their allies, and the remedy as the strictest possible form of centralized control over all spheres of social life.

creation of remedies for these, and the consequent improvement in the individual's standard of living, can only be brought about when the causes of these phenomena have been removed. Help comes in two ways. Either the individuals who constitute the proletariat realize that they can help themselves only by bringing about a voluntary strengthening of labour-discipline, and consequently a rise in production: or, if they are incapable of this, they create institutions which are capable of bringing about this necessary state of affairs. In the latter case, they create a legal system through which the proletariat compels its own individual members, the proletarians, to act in a way which corresponds to their class-interests: the proleterist turns its dictatorship against itself. This measure is necessary for the self-preservation of the proletariat when correct recognition of classinterests and voluntary action in these interests do not exist. But one musi not hide from oneself the fact that this method contains within itself great dangers for the future. When the proletariat itself is the creator of labour discipline, when the labour-system of the proletarian state is built on a moral basis, then the external compulsion of the law ceases automatically with the abolition of class division—that is, the state withers away—and this liquidation of class-division produces out of itself the beginning of the true history of humanity, which Marx prophesied and hoped for. If on the other hand, the proletariat follows another path, it must create: legal system which cannot be abolished automatically by historica development. Development would therefore proceed in a direction which endangered the appearance and realization of the ultimate aim. For the legal system which the proletariat is compelled to create in this way was be overthrown and who knows what convulsions and what injuries will be caused by a transition which leads from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom by such a détour? . . . It depends on the proletaria whether the real history of humanity begins—that is to say, the power of morality over institutions and economics.'18

This quotation shows Lukács's great power of insight as regards the objective dialectic of a certain type of development, formulated from rather abstract philosophical point of view. Lenin, by comparisor preferring 'deeds' to 'words', was far too busy trying to squeeze out the last drop of practical socialist possibilities from the objective instruments set-up of his situation to indulge in theoretical anticipations of this kind i 1919. By the time he started to concentrate on the dreadful danger of a ever-increasing domination of the ideals of socialism by the 'institution of necessity', it was too late—not only for him personally, but historicall too late—to reverse the course of developments. The idea of autonomov working-class action had been replaced by advocacy of 'the greater possible centralization'. 19 Both the Soviets and the factory councils has

¹⁸ 'Az erkolcs exercepe a komunista termelésben' (The Role of Morality in Communi-Production). The translation here is my own, but see Georg Lukács, *Political Writin*, 1919—1929, London 1968, pp. 51—2

^{19 &#}x27;Communism requires and presupposes the greatest passible centralization of large-sca production throughout the country. The all-Russia centre, therefore, should definitely begiven the right of direct central over all the enterprises of the given branch of industry. The regional centres define their functions depending on local conditions of life, etc., accordance with the general production directions and decisions of the central. Anything sho of such centralization was condemned as 'regional anarcho-syndicalism'. See Lenin, Collect Works, Vol. 42, p. 96 (emphasis added).

debate all attempts at securing even a very limited degree or seirdetermination for the working-class base had been dismissed as 'syndicalist nonsense'20 and as 'a deviation towards syndicalism and anarchism', at seen as a direct threat to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The cruel irony of it all is that Lenin himself, totally dedicated as he was to the cause of the socialist revolution, helped to paralyse the selfsame forces of the working-class base to which he tried to turn later for help, when he perceived the fateful danger of those developments in Russia which were to culminate in Stalinism. Against this background, it is pathetic to see Lenin, a genius of realistic strategy, behaving like a desperate utopian from 1923 to the moment of his death: insistently putting forward hopeless schemes—like the proposal to create a majority in the Central Committee from working-class cadres, in order to neutralize the Party bureaucrats—in the hope of reversing this dangerous trend, by now far too advanced. Lenin's great tragedy was that his incomparable, instrumentally concrete, intensely practical strategy in the end defeated him. In the last year of his life, there was no longer a way out of his almost total isolation. The developments he himself, far more than anybody else, had helped to set in motion had made him historically superfluous. The specific form in which he lived the unity of theory and practice proved to be the limit even of his greatness.

What was extremely problematical in Lukács's discourse was the suggestion that the acceptance of the need for higher productivity and greater labour discipline—as a result of the philosopher's direct moral appeal to the consciousness of individual proletarians might avert the danger so graphically described and render the creation of the institutions of necessity superfluous. What degree of labour discipline is high enough under the conditions of extreme urgency of the necessary 'material groundwork'? Is 'correct recognition of class-interest' ipso facto the end of all possible objective contradiction between individual and class interest? These and similar questions did not appear on Lukács's horizon, which remained idealistically clouded by postulating an individualistic yet uniform moral base of social practice as an alternative to collective necessity. Nevertheless, he clearly spelled out not only the possibility of the proletariat turning its dictatorship against itself, but also the anguishing implications of such a state of affairs for the future when 'the legal system which the proletariat is compelled to create in this way wast be overthrown'.

Was it this early thought, perhaps, which Lukács tried to amplify in much greater detail, in the light of subsequent developments, in an unpublished 'political testament' he wrote in 1968, following his bitter condemnation of the military intervention in Czechoslovakia? Be that as it may, the dilemma remains as acute as ever. What were those objective and subjective determinations which produced the submission of the

m Ibid., p 246 And again, "The syndicalist malaise must and will be cured', Ibid., p 107.

²⁰ 'All this syndicalist nonsense about mandatory nominations of producers must go into the wastepaper basket. To proceed on those lines would mean thrusting the Party aside and making the dictatorship of the prelaterat in Russia impassible.' Ibid, Vol. 32, p. 62 (emphasis added).

possible to overcome them? How is it possible to avoid the potential convulsions associated with the imperative need of changing in depth the prevailing forms of political rule? What are the conditions of transforming the existing rigid 'institutions of necessity', by means of which dissent is suppressed and compulsion enforced, into more flexible institutions of social involvement, foreshadowing that 'free development of individualities' which continues to elude us?

Individual and Class

This is the point where we must put into relief the relevance for ou problem of Marx's considerations on the relationship between individus and class. For in the absence of a proper understanding of thi relationship, the transformation of the transitional political form into dictatorship exercised also over the proletariat (notwithstanding th original democratic intent) remains deeply shrouded in mystery. How i it possible for such a transformation to take place? The ideas c 'degeneration', 'bureaucratization', 'substitutionism' and the like no only all beg the question, but also culminate in an illusory remedy explicit or implied: namely, that the simple overthrow of this politic form and the substitution of dedicated revolutionaries for part bureaucrats will reverse the process—forgetting that the blamed part bureaucrats too were in their time dedicated revolutionaries. Hypothese of this kind idealistically transfer the problem from the plane of objectiv contradictions to that of individual psychology, which can explain at beonly the question of why a certain type of person is best suited to media the objective structures of a given political form, but not the nature (those structures themselves.

Similarly, it would be very naive to accept that the new structures (political domination suddenly and automatically—and just & mysteriously—come into existence following the refusal of proletariar to accept an intensified labour-discipline and a self-sacrifice that hav been dictated to them. On the contrary, the very fact that the question co be raised in this form is itself already evidence that the structures c domination are in existence before the question is even thought o Admonitions and threats are empty words if they do not issue out material power. But if they do, it is an idealistic reversal of the actual sta of affairs to represent material dictates as moral imperatives which, unheeded, would be followed by material dictates and sanctions. reality, material dictates are internalized as moral imperatives only undthe exceptional circumstances of a state of emergency, when reality itse rules out the possibility of alternative courses of action. To identify the two—i.e. to treat material dictates as moral imperatives—would mean: lock the life-processes of society into the unbearably narrow confines of permanent state of emergency.

What are the structures of domination on the basis of which the ne political form arises, which it must get rid of if it is not to remain permanent obstacle to the realization of socialism? In discussions Marx's critique of the state, what is usually forgotten is that it is n concerned simply with the termination of a specific form of class rule

emancipation of the social individual. The following quotation makes this amply clear: 'the proletarians, if they are to assert themselves as individuals, have to abolish the hitherto prevailing condition of their existence (which has, moreover, been that of all society up to then), namely, labour. Thus they find themselves directly opposed to the form in which, hitherto, the individuals, of which society consists, have given themselves collective expression, that is, the State. In order, therefore, to assert themselves as individuals, they must overthrow the State. Try and remove the concept of 'individuals' from this reasoning, and the whole enterprise becomes meaningless. For the need to abolish the State arises because the individuals cannot 'assert themselves as individuals', and not simply because one class is dominated by another.

The same consideration applies to the question of individual and class. Again, discussions of Marx's theory as a rule neglect this aspect, and concentrate on what he says about emancipating the proletariat from the bourgeoisie. But what would be the point of this emancipation if the individuals who constitute the proletariat remained dominated by the proletariat as a class? And it is precisely this relationship of domination which precedes the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no need to newly establish the domination of the proletarians by the proletariat, since that domination already exists, though in a different form, well before the question of taking power historically arises: 'the class in its turn assumes an independent existence as against the individuals, so that the latter find their conditions of life predstermined, and have their position in life and hence their personal development assigned to them by their class, thus become subsumed under it. This is the same phenomenon as the subjection of the separate individuals to the division of labour and can only be removed by the abolition of private property and of labour itself." 12

To be sure, this aspect of class domination holds in all forms of class society, irrespective of their specific political superstructures. Nor could it be otherwise, given the existence of irreconcilable inter-class antagonisms; indeed, the submission of the individuals to their class is a necessary concomitant of the latter. Moreover, this condition applies just as much to advanced capitalist countries as to their more or less underdeveloped counterparts. It would, therefore, be illusory to expect that the political consequences of this objective structural contradiction could be avoided simply in virtue of some undeniable differences at the level of the legal-political superstructure. For the contradiction in question is an objective antagonism of the socio-economic base as structured according to a hierarchical social division of labour, though, of course, it also manifests itself at the political plane. Underneath any so-called 'elected dictatorship of Ministers' (or, for that matter, under whatever other form of liberal democracy), there lies the 'unelected dictatorship' of the hierarchical-social division of labour, which structurally subordinates one class to another and at the same time subjects individuals to their own class as well, predestining them to a narrowly defined position and role in

23 Ibid., p. 77 (emphasis added).

The German Ideology, in Marx and Engels, Collected Works, Vol 5, London 1976, p. 80 (emphasis added)

economic system, and thus unceremoniously ensuring that, m Ministers come and go as the electors please, the structure of dominati itself remains intact.

Paradoxically, this dilemma of the structural domination of individu by their own class becomes more rather than less acute in the aftermath the revolution. In the preceding form of society, the severity of inter-cli antagonism gives an apparently—and to a significant extent al objectively—benevolent character to the subjection of individuals their own class, in that the class does not champion only its own intere-28 a class but, simultaneously, also the interests of its individual membe against the other class. Individual proletarians accept their subordination to their own class—though even that not without deep-scated confl over objective sectional interests since class solidarity is a necessiprerequisite of their emancipation from the rule of the capitalist cla although it is in an astronomical distance from being the sufficient condit. of their emancipation as social individuals. Once the capitalist class defeated and expropriated, however, the objective structua contradiction between class and individual is activated in its full intensit since the dampening factor of inter-class antagonism is effective removed, or at least transferred to the international plane.

It is this contradiction between class and individual which is intensified the aftermath of the revolution to the point that it may indeed, in the absence of adequate corrective forces and measures, endanger the vesurvival of the dictatorship of the proletariat and revert society to the status quo ants. What we witness, however, at the level of political ideolog and practice is the misrepresentation of a necessary prerequisite of class emancipation as the sufficient condition of full emancipation, which said to be hindered only by 'survivals from the past', or the 'survival the class enemy'. Thus the rather intangible 'enemy within' becomes mythical force whose empirical counterpart must be invented, to fill with millions of common people the emerging concentration camps.

One cannot emphasize too strongly that the ideological-politic mystification does not feed on itself (if only it did, for that would l relatively easy to overcome), but on an objective contradiction of th socio-economic base. It is because 'the condition of existence (individual proletarians, namely labour', is not abolished as Mai advocated—because in other words, hierarchical social division of labor remains the fundamental regulatory force of the social metabolism—th: the antagonism, deprived of its justification through the expropriation (the opposite class, intensifies, creating a new form of alienation betwee the individuals who constitute society and the political power whic controls their interchanges. It is because the dictatorship of th proletariat cannot remove the 'contradictions of civil society' b abolishing both sides of the social antagonism, including labour—on th contrary, it has to envisage enhancing the latter, in function of th absolutely necessary 'material foundation'—that 'the proletariat turn its dictatorship against itself. M Or, to be more precise, in order t

MAs Lukács put it in the passage quoted earlier

dictatorship against all individuals who constitute society, including the proletarians. (Indeed, including the party and state officials who have a mandate to carry out determinate functions and not others, following the imperatives of the system in existence and not their own exclusive sectional interests, even if by virtue of their privileged location with regard to the machinery of power they are in a position to appropriate a greater portion of the social product than other groups of individuals, whether or not they actually do so.)

Since one side of the antithesis Marx speaks of-labour-cannot be preserved on its own, under the new conditions of the post-revolutionary society a new form of manifestation must be found for the other side as well. The expropriation of the capitalist class, and the radical disruption and alteration of the normal market conditions which characterize the functioning of commodity society, impose radically new functions on the proletarian state. It is called upon to regulate, in toto and in small detail, the production and distribution process, directly determining the allocation of social resources, the conditions and the intensity of labour, the rate of surplus-extraction and accumulation, and the particular share of each individual in that portion of the social product which it makes available for consumption. From now on we are confronted with a system of production in which the extraction of surplus-labour is politically determined in the most summary form, using extra-economic criteria (ultimately the survival of the state itself) which, under determinate conditions, may in fact disrupt or even chronically retard the development of the productive forces. Such a politically determined extraction of surplus-labour-which, under the conditions of extreme penury and in the absence of strictly economic regulatory forces and mechanisms, may indeed reach dangerously high levels, whereupon it becomes self-defeatingly counter-productive-inevitably sharpens the contradiction between individual producers and the state, with the gravest implications for the possibility of dissent. For under these circumstances dissent may directly endanger the extraction of surpluslabour (and everything else built upon it), thus potentially depriving the dictatorship of the proletariat of its material base and challenging its very survival.

By contrast, the liberal state, under normal conditions, has no need to regulate directly the extraction of surplus-value, since the complex mechanisms of commodity-production take care of that. All it has to do is to ensure indirectly the safeguard of the economic system itself. Therefore, it need not worry at all about the manifestations of political dissent, so long as the impersonal mechanisms of commodity-production carry on their functions undisturbed. Of course, the situation significantly changes at times of major crises, when the forces of opposition cannot confine themselves any longer to contesting only the rate of surplus-value extraction, but have to question the very mode of surplus-value production and appropriation. If they do this with any success, then the capitalist state may be compelled to assume very far from 'liberal' forms. Similarly, under the conditions of present-day development, when we can witness as a trend that the whole system of global capitalism is becoming extremely 'disfunctional', the state is forced to assume increasingly more

dissent and opposition. But even under such circumstances, the respective structures are fundamentally different in that the political involvement of the capitalist state applies to an all-pervasive system of commodity-production, and the underlying aim is the reconstitution of the self-regulatory function of the latter, whether it can be successfully accomplished or not. By contrast, the post-revolutionary state combines as a matter of normality, the function of overall political control with that of securing and regulating the extraction of surplus-labour as the new mode of carrying on the material life-processes of society. It is the closs-integration of the two which produces apparently insurmountable difficulties for dissent and opposition.

Breaking the Rule of Capital

All this puts sharply into relief the dilemma we have to face when we tr to envisage a socialist solution to the underlying problems. In 1957 gifted young German writer Conrad Rheinhold had to flee the DDP where he used to run a political cabaret in the aftermath of the Twentiet Congress. After he had had some experience of life in West Germany. bwas asked by Der Spisgel to describe the main difference between his oland new situations. This was his answer: In the East political cabaret) supposed to change society, but it is not allowed to say anything; in the West it is allowed to say whatever it pleases, so long as it cannot change anything at all.' ('Im Osten soll das Kabarett die Gesellschaft ändern, darf abe nichts sagen; im Westen kann es alles sagen, darf aber nichts andern.") Is there way out of this painful dilemma? If there is, it must be through thmaturation of the objective conditions of development to which politic. movements can relate themselves, greatly accelerating or powerful frustrating their unfolding. In this respect, it matters very much whether or not post-revolutionary societies represent some new form (capitalism ('state capitalism', for example). For if they do, with the adverof the revolution nothing has really happened: no real steps have bee taken in the direction of emancipation, and the allegedly monolith power of capitalism which prevails in all its forms makes the future loc extremely gloomy.

Marx wrote his Capital in the service of breaking the rule of capital, no just capitalism. Yet, strangely enough, it is on the assessment of the innermost nature of his project that the misconceptions are the greate and most damaging. The title of Book I of Capital Volume One was fir translated into English, under Engels's supervision, as 'A Critic Analysis of Capitalist Production', whereas the original speaks of 'The Process of Production of Capital' (Der Produktionsprocess des Kapital which is a radically different thing. Marx's project is concerned with the conditions of production and reproduction of capital itself—its generand expansion, as well as the inherent contradictions which foreshado its supersession through a long and painful process of development's whereas the mistranslated version speaks of a given phase of capit production only, while confusingly conflating the concepts of 'capital production' and 'production of capital'.

The concept of capital is much more fundamental than that of capitalis

former embraces a great deal more than that. It is concerned, in addition to the mode of functioning of the given capitalist society, with the conditions of origin and development of capital production, including the phases when commodity-production is not all-pervasive and dominating as it is under capitalism. On the other side of the radical sociohistorical line of demarcation drawn by the breakdown of capitalism, it is equally concerned with the forms and modalities in which the need for capital production is bound to survive in post-capitalist societies for a long and painful historical period—until, that is, the hierarchical social division of labour itself is successfully superseded, and society is completely restructured in accordance with the free association of social individuals who consciously regulate their own life-activities.

The rule of capital, rooted in the prevailing system of division of labour (which cannot conceivably be abolished by a political act alone, no matter how radical and free from 'degeneration'), thus prevails over a significant part of the transitional period, although it must exhibit the characteristics of a diminishing trend if the transition is to be successful at all. But this does not mean that post-revolutionary societies remain 'capitalist', just as feudal and earlier societies cannot be rightfully characterized as capitalist on the basis of the more or less extensive use of monetary capital and the more or less advanced share which commodity-production, as a subordinate element, occupies in them. Capitalism is that particular phase of capital production in which 1. production for exchange (and thus the mediation and domination of use-value by exchange-value) is allpervasive; 2. labour-power itself, just as much as anything else, 18 treated as a commodity; 3. the drive for profit is a fundamental regulatory force of production: A, the vital mechanism of the extraction of surplus-value, the radical separation of the means of production from the producers, assumes an inherently economic form; 5. the economically extracted surplusvalue is privately appropriated by the members of the capitalist class; and 6. following its own economic imperative of growth and expansion, capital production tends towards a global integration, through the intermediary of the world market, as a totally interdependent system of economic domination and subordination. To speak of capitalism in postrevolutionary societies, when out of these essential defining characteristics only one—number four—remains and even that in a radically altered form in that the extraction of surplus-labour is regulated politically and not economically, can be done only by disregarding or misrepresenting the objective conditions of development, with serious consequences for the possibility of gaining insight into the real nature of the problems at stake.

Capital maintains its—by no means unrestricted—rule in postrevolutionary societies primarily through 1. the material imperatives which circumscribe the possibilities of the totality of life-processes; 2. the inherited social division of labour which, notwithstanding its significant modifications, contradicts 'the development of free individualities'; 3. the objective structure of the available production apparatus (including plant and machinery) and of the historically developed and restricted form of scientific knowledge, both originally produced in the framework of capital production and under the conditions of the social division of societies with the global system of capitalism, whether these assume the form of a 'peaceful competition' (e.g. commercial and cultural exchanges) or that of a potentially deadly opposition (from the arms race to more or less limited actual confrontations in contested areas). Thus the issue is incomparably more complex and far-reaching than its conventional characterization as the imperative of capital accumulation, now renamed as 'socialist accumulation'.

Capital constitutes a highly contradictory world system, with the capitalist 'metropolitan' countries and the major post-revolutionary societies as its poles related to a multiplicity of gradations and stages of mixed development. It is this dynamic, contradictory totality which makes the possibilities of dissent and opposition much more hopeful than the monolithic conception of the power of capitalism would suggest. Post-revolutionary societies are also post-capitalist societies, in the significant sense that their objective structures effectively prevent the restoration of capitalism. To be sure, their inner contradictions, further complicated and intensified by their interactions with capitalist countries, may produce shifts and adjustments within their structures in favour of commodity relations. Nevertheless, the possibility of such shifts and adjustments is fairly limited. It is strictly circumscribed by the fact that the political extraction of surplus-labour cannot be radically altered without profoundly affecting (indeed endangering) the political power is existence. The systematic frustration and prevention of dissent has its complement in the extremely limited success of recent attempts as introducing strictly economic mechanisms into the overall structure o production. Post-revolutionary societies, as yet, have no such self regulatory mechanisms which would ensure that dissenters 'say whateve they please without changing anything at all'. Indeed, it would be . Pyrrhic victory if dissent developed in post-revolutionary societies parallel to the reintroduction of powerful capitalistic mechanisms and institutions. Positive developments in this respect may be envisaged only if the system finds some way of achieving an effective, institutionally underpinned distribution of political power (even if very limited in the first place) which does not represent a danger to the prevailing mode o extracting surplus-labour as such although of necessity it would question its particular manifestations and excesses. In other words 'decentralization', 'diversification', 'autonomy' and the like must b implemented in post-revolutionary societies as in the first placepolitical principles, in order to be meaningful at all.

The dynamic, contradictory totality mentioned above is also a interdependent totality through and through. What happens at one place has an important bearing on the possibilities of development elsewher. The demand for a much greater effectiveness of dissent and opposition: the West arises now under circumstances when the capitalist systemenhibits severe symptoms of crisis, with potentially far-reaching consequences. The weakening of the essential mechanisms of control commodity society—which in their normal functioning successful nullify dissent and opposition without the slightest need for suppressing—offers more scope for the development of effective alternatives, and the debate on 'pluralism' must be situated in the

that virtually all forces of the left have thoroughly disengaged themselves from an earlier uncritical attitude towards the assessment of post-revolutionary developments. This attitude in the past reflected a state of enforced immobility, and could not envisage more than repeatedly reasserting its ideal as a 'declaration of intent' about the future, however remote, instead of undertaking a realistic assessment of a historical experience in relation to its own concrete tasks. In a world of total interdependence, if effective achievements result from this critical examination—which is inseparably also a self-examination—that will not be without positive consequences for the development of dissent and meaningful opposition in the post-revolutionary societies.



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Maria



On the Nature of the Soviet State

be sixtieth anniversary of the Russian revolution was celebrated this year.* It was also the rtieth anniversary of the publication of Trotsky's The Revolution Betrayed, which alysed the Soviet Union as a degenerate workers' state. Many historic events have occurred ring the past four decades. We have seen the maintenance and relative stabilization of the wiet bureaucracy, and the emergence—in a variety of historical conditions—of other reaucratic régimes. What, then, is the validity of Trotsky's analysis forty years on? How s the Trotskyist movement added to it, and how has the theory stood up to the test of events?

rotsky's point of departure, and this is where the strength of his position on the aracter of the user lies, was the view taken by the entire working-class Left at e beginning of the Russian revolution of 1917 (and which was subsequently andoned by one revisionist tendency after another), that it was impossible to amine the origins and development of the Russian revolution while isolating issia from the rest of the world. The paradox that lies at the root of the theory of rmanent revolution—that the proletariat could conquer power in the less

ones—has meaning only in the context of a particular analysis of imperialism and the class struggle on a world scale. It is only because of the phenomenon of imperialism, or more precisely the beginning of the capitalist mode of production's decline, that Marx's old dictum that the most advanced countries mirror the future of the least advanced is no longer generally applicable in the twentieth century.

Trotsky drew two conclusions from this initial position. First, that the victory of the Russian Revolution was possible only through the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the poor peasantry. Secondly, that the construction of a classless society, a complete socialist society, in this backward country was obviously impossible. The Mensheviks stuck to Marx's nineteenth-century position. They failed to understand the consequences of the advent of the imberialist era. They did not understand the weight and logic o underdevelopment, which have so strongly marked the consciousness o contemporary revolutionaries and demonstrate what Russia could have become had it not been for the victory of the October Revolution. Stalin on the other hand—and this remains true of the Stalinists to this day, as o all tendencies that analyse the nature of the Soviet Union solely on the basis of the internal trends at work within it—committed the paralle error of disregarding Russia's insertion into the world, with all it economic, military, and social implications, and assuming that it was possible, under certain conditions, to complete the construction of a classless society in a single country.

What underlay Trotsky's theoretical position, independent o conjunctural formulations and trends, was that for him the fate of the Soviet Union ultimately depended on the outcome of the class struggle on a world scale. Stalinism thus appears as an unforeseen variant o history, a function of what could be called the unstable equilibrium between the fundamental antagonistic social forces on a world scale Stalinism is the expression of a defeat and serious regression of the world revolution after 1923. But it also reflects the long-term structure weakness of world capitalism, which has been unable to restore th capitalist mode of production in the ussa despite repeated attempts, both economic and military. Behind the formulae 'transitional stage' 'transitional society', lies the reality of this not yet definitively decided tes of strength between capital and labour on a world scale. In this sense a well, the way Trotsky formulated the alternative in 1939-40 remain essentially correct, although he was wrong about the timing. A crushindefeat for the world proletariat, for an entire historical period, not onl could but inevitably would lead to the restoration of capitalism in th USSR. A crushing defeat for capital, for the world bourgeoisie, in sever: of the key countries of the capitalist world would set the ussr back o course towards the construction of a classless society.

^{*}This interview with Ernest Mandel was conducted by Denis Berger for Critic Community No 18-19, November-December 1977, a special issue commemorating t sixtieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. It is translated here with thanks.

turns out, Trotsky's expectation of a relatively rapid uquidation of Staumism, either through a proletarian political revolution or through a capitalist restoration, was wrong. In addition, other states have been created in which hureamcracies have consolidated power, in particular forms depending on particular committees. Do these facts not enable us to give the notion of 'transition' a Marxist character both broader and more precise than it had in Marxist tradition at the time Trotsky was writing?

First of all, there is no 'Marxist tradition' on this subject in the real sense of the word. Marx himself had no time to dwell on this problem. Nor did Engels. After their deaths, vulgarization and simplification took hold, culminating in Stalin's famous writings on the modes of production through which all societies are supposedly required to pass—primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism. In reality, it is only in the most recent period, with the renaissance of Marxist historical analysis and the penetration of methods inspired by Marxism into academic historical research, that the initial foundations of this exciting chapter of Marxist theory have been laid. But these foundations are still fragmentary; a lot remains to be done.

Today, taking only Europe and leaving out of consideration other parts of the world and other civilizations, we can see that there were actually long periods of transition between all the great modes of production. In light of this observation, the case of Soviet society, far from constituting an exceptional, unusually long process of transition, appears as a quite limited one. Let us take two examples.

If you define the slave mode of production as founded essentially on the productive labour of slaves in agriculture and crafts (the principal sources of the social product), and if you define the feudal mode of production as founded essentially on the labour of serfs in agricultural production, then you find that a centuries-long period of transition separated the predominance of slave labour from the predominance of serf labour, at least in western, central and southern Europe (I leave aside the Byzantine empire). This period saw, in varying forms and combinations, the elevation of the lot of the slaves side by side with the deterioration of the lot of the free peasants, especially those of the so-called barbarian ethnic tribes that penetrated the Roman empire. It was only through the fusion of these two social forces, which was probably completed around the seventh or eighth century, that the feudal mode of production proper became dominant.

The second example is clearer, although of shorter duration. The decline of serfdom is quite evident by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the most advanced parts of the European economy, especially in the Low Countries, England, a portion of France, a portion of northern and central Italy, and Germany. In some of these regions, serfdom virtually disappeared as the predominant relation of production in agriculture. Now, the disappearance of serfdom does not immediately lead to the generalization, or even the large-scale extension, of wage-labour. In other words, there is manifestly another transitional period between the decline of serfdom and the rise of wage-labour; between the decline of the feudal

production. (I say deliberately 'capitalist mode of production' a 'domination of market or banking capital', which is something else. I am speaking of capitalist relations of production.) This transition period may also be characterized as the economic organization found on petty commodity production (a term which is open to discussion under which the essential producer is neither the serf nor the wag labourer, but the small-scale producer having access to the means of production and subsistence. In fact, it is the transformation not of the serious the wage labourer, but of this independent producer into the labourer, that gives rise to capitalism as the predominant mo production in the real sense of the term, since one of the characterist the proletariat is precisely that it is free, not subject to personal servi-

This transitional period is shorter than the one that separated the sl from the feudal mode of production. It involves much greater difficult of socio-economic analysis, because of the very complexity of situations. In general, what we are dealing with here is a manifestation the law of uneven and combined development. If you wanted to give' really precise definition of the relations of production prevailing is Flanders, Brabant, Lombardy, Tuscany, the Rhineland, and even French and English regions at the end of the fifteenth century, you would face extreme difficulties. It would be difficult to reduce them all the a sing common denominator. There was a blending of semi-feudal relati production, relations of production that underlie petty commodi production, and semi-capitalist relations of production; there was also the beginning of capitalist manufacture already founded on wage labour Nevertheless, it is impossible to reduce all this to the formula, either feudalism or capitalism. This is the point I want to stress. In spite of the particular features of the epoch, we are clearly dealing with a transitional phase.

But even though it is true that under the slave or the feudal mode of production elements of the new mode already develop in the form of new social relations opproduction, can one say that elements of socialism can develop as new relations opproduction within capitalist society itself?

Obviously not. You can say that the preconditions for the existence of a classless society are developing within the capitalist mode of production, but not socialized relations of production. And it is exactly for this reason that the advent of a transitional society between capitalism and socialism is impossible without the prior overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie; without the overthrow of the bourgeois state; and, I would say, without despotic incursions into the right of property—to use the formula of Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto. This is not an argument against the notion that the Soviet Union is a transitional society, analogous to those of the past. It is simply an argument justifying a different articulation of the new relations of production with the state power. This is in fact one of the strongest elements of our analysis. Postcapitalist relations of production cannot be developed within a society ruled by the bourgeoisie, governed by a bourgeois state. This means that the emergence of such relations of production is possible only after a socialist revolution.

transitional stage, a society in transition between two great 'successive modes of production in the history of humanity, is not an isolated phenomenon limited to Soviet society and all the problems related to the transition from capitalism to socialism. It is a phenomenon that has been manifested much more generally throughout human history. For Marxists interested in Africa, for example, there is a particularly fascinating question related to this problematic: the exact definition of what African society was at the time of the colonial occupation, and even during the phase following this occupation, in so far as it did not lead to a complete, radical transformation of the indigenous relations of production, particularly in the villages, but even partially outside them. In reality, it is impossible to understand Black Africa in the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century without using the eminently transitional notion of 'social classes in formation' or 'nascent social classes'. This, in fact, is the rational kernel contained in all the theses of a supposedly 'African' socialism, according to which Marxism is inapplicable in Africa. Such theses are obviously quite erroneous. They fail to understand the historical process; they fail to understand development, taking mere snapshots of one moment of evolution. But the snapshot, although sometimes blurred, is not always inaccurate. In dealing with the typical African village at the end of the nineteenth or the beginning of the twentieth century—when after all 80-90 per cent of the population lived in such villages—one cannot say that feudal lords or owners of capitalist property confronted a mass of proletarians or small peasants in the process of becoming landless peasants. (I am speaking here of the typical African village; not the Arab village, which 18 different; nor the village in South Africa or the colonies settled by whites, which are different again; nor the colonial towns, which are different once more.) Granted, there are cases of feudalism or semi-feudalism in some African countries, in certain regions of some countries; there are even cases of semi-capitalist agriculture or semi-capitalist relations; and remnants of slavery persist here and there. But, I repeat, it is a process in which a good part of the population finds itself precisely in a phase of transition from classless to class society.

The analysis of these societies is obviously less awkward with this conceptual framework than it is for an ultra-simple Marxism. If one believes that things are either black or white, that there is either capitalism or classless society, that there is either the democratic power of the workers or by a priori definition—the power of a new owning class, then one will be confronted with one mystery after another. But if one rejects these oversimplifications and returns to an approach that integrates all the dimensions of the problem of what constitutes class society, what constitutes the withering away of social classes and what constitutes a classless society, then the fact that the transitional period has turned out to be longer than initially expected becomes less astonishing. Just because a certain type of society lasts longer than had been foreseen is no reason to deny, by definition, that it can be a transitional society. Just because a transition is more complex and—to put it paradoxically—less 'dynamic', since it 'transits' less rapidly than expected, is no reason to say that it is not transitional. The fact that one halts on a bridge for a long time instead of walking across does not change the character of the bridge

factors have modified the pace, orientation and possibilities of t traveller's progress. The bridge remains defined essentially as a means communication between two banks above a surface of water. By analog a transitional stage between capitalism and socialism is defined, at le structurally, by the fact that there is no longer generalized commod production; that the means of production are no longer commodition that they have therefore, by definition, lost their character as capital; the class of capitalists that existed in the country before the soc revolution no longer holds political, economic and social power; but there are not yet truly socialist, self-managed and free relations production of the associated producers; instead there is a hybicombination of elements of the past and elements of the future.

But this hybrid combination gives rise to something specific—and it perhaps from this standpoint that we have advanced somewhat ov Trotsky's analysis. It gives rise to the specific relations of production this transitional stage. Here I must raise a theoretical problem that is n easy to understand but is one of the theoretical keys to a grasp of t socio-economic reality of the Soviet Union. I refer to the distinction between the notion of specific relations of production, which characteri any given social formation (a given social formation without relations production would be a social formation without production; in oth words, a social formation that could not survive, lifeless and witho existence), and the notion of mode of production. Although it is corre to say that there is no social formation without specific relations production, it is false to say that any specific relation of production necessarily implies the existence of a specific or predominant mode production. One of the essential distinctions between transition periods, and the great 'progressive stages' of history outlined by Marx the preface to his Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, is precise that the former do not have a specific mode of production, whereas tl latter are by definition characterized by such modes. Let us first look the theoretical explanation of this distinction, in the light of which we w then return to the socio-economic analysis of the Soviet Union.

What characterizes a mode of production is that it is a structure and th its quantitative, gradual modification, which occurs through evolution, possible only so long as it is compatible with the internal logic of the whole, which, although it may be torn and contradictory, nonethele remains an organic whole. This whole, like anything organic, ca reproduce itself more or less automatically. I do not say that it ca reproduce itself more or less automatically through the economic mechanism alone—this is a characteristic which in the final analysis applicable only to the capitalist mode of production. In the pre-capitalis modes of production, the articulations between the various instrument of economic, political and ideological reproduction can be markedl different from what they are in a bourgeois society. But the essence of th problem remains the same: once launched into orbit, the structur remains in this orbit and can be diverted from it only by social revolution or counter-revolutions, by explosions, by very violent, explosiv perturbations.

the relations of production of a society in transition between two modes of production can decompose of their own accord, evolve in various directions without necessarily experiencing revolutionary perturbations of the same type as the social revolutions necessary for the passage from one mode of production to another. The passage to petty commodity production was not preceded by the seizure of political power by petty commodity producers: there was no 'petty-commodity-production state'. There was a feudal state and then a bourgeois state. The advent of capitalism did not require a social and political revolution to decompose the relations of production founded on petty commodity production. The mere penetration/expansion of money-capital in the economy, in a context determined by the world capitalist market, by the domination of market capitalism, sufficed to bring about this phenomenon of decomposition. To sum up, one may say that the fundamental difference between the relations of production characteristic of transitional phases on the one hand and modes of production on the other is a qualitatively different degree of stability.

Examining the situation in the Soviet Union in the light of this distinction, we may draw a number of conclusions. First, it can easily be demonstrated that—contrary to claims that the relations of production in the USSR are essentially socialist—because of the absence of a real régime of the associated producers, and because of the conditions of subordination and impotence in which the mass of direct producers are maintained vis-à-vis the managers of the means of production, the term 'socialist' cannot be used unless it is emptied of all content. This is not solely a 'normative', moral, subjective judgment, although there is no reason to dismiss this aspect of the Marxist analysis: a Marxist never accepts oppression, even if the oppressor régime is historically progressive compared with the régime it has replaced. It is also an objective economic judgment. We know that it is impossible to achieve optimal and harmonious planning through the bureaucratic road; that socialist democracy and free control by the masses, the broadest selfmanagement, are indispensable to achieve this end.

Secondly, it can easily be demonstrated that—contrary to claims that the relations of production in the Soviet Union are essentially capitalist—capitalist relations of production cannot at all be reduced to 'domination by masters of the means of production over the direct producers', but imply a whole series of additional features: notably, that the means of production be commodities, that these means of production circulate among units of production in the form of the buying and selling of machines, raw materials, etc. Moreover, most of the long-term laws of development of the capitalist mode of production are already inherent in the fundamental contradiction of the single commodity, the contradiction between use-value and exchange-value. It was not by accident that Marx constructed the first volume of Capital, and everything in his economic analysis that followed from it, in this way. And none of this applies to the socio-economic reality of the Soviet Union.

In the third place, if one were to assert that the relations of production in the Soviet Union are neither socialist nor capitalist but those of a new the origins of this mysterious new ruling class, which is completely no existent as a class up to zero hour, when it seizes power. One would hat to uncover the dynamic, the laws of development of this society something which none of the proponents of this theory have ever be capable of doing. It would also have to be shown that these relations production, allegedly characteristic of a new mode of production, hat the stability and capacity for self-reproduction common to modes production, which is contrary to everything we know about Sovisociety, not to mention the 'people's democracies'. Moreover, let us not in passing that any Marxist who affixes the label 'new class' to the Sovibureaucracy is compelled to recognize the progressive character of the bureaucracy relative to the bourgeoisie, and must credit it with the enormous economic and cultural achievements of the ussa, just as the achievements of the nineteenth century must clearly be credited to the bourgeoisie.

If we reject these three hypotheses, there is only one way out: we a dealing with the specific, hybrid relations of production of a specific country (or group of countries). In other words, we are faced with the analysis of relations of production peculiar not to the period of transition from capitalism to socialism in general, but to a society which, although is passing through this stage, has experienced particular processes development in a given historical context. This implies both pronounced fragility of the relations of production, compared with the characteristic of stable modes of production, and a greater stability the could have been foreseen under the assumption that the phenomeno would be very short-lived.

If then, following Trotsky, we analyse any post-bourgeois stage of development in 1 framework of class struggle on a world scale, we arrive at the conclusion that Octob 1917, the first victorious socialist revolution, inaugurated a period of worldwitransition whose duration, although it cannot be predicted exactly, threatens to relatively long compared with the predictions of Russian revolutionaries just before the seignre of power—or for that matter compared with some of Trotsky's or writings. Do you agree with this?

Yes and no. You know that the question of so-called 'centuries transition' has played a certain role in the history of the Four International. I do not want to be misinterpreted, and above all I would not like to give the impression that a specific historical process w: somehow fated to be, or governed by an innate tendency within th proletariat, structurally or organically linked to it. For in fact that proce must be understood in the context of the test of strength between th classes that was joined when the era of capitalism's decline began. Whi we have seen in the Soviet Union, the ossification of the bureaucracy over half a century, does not correspond to any objective necessity, to any fat It is the product of a combination of unique historical circumstances. Th fact that this system spread into Eastern Europe, and profoundl influenced the structures of domination and organization of the worker state even in China, Vietnam and Cuba, does not invalidate this analysis For it is obvious that what occurred in all these countries was a by product of what occurred in the Soviet Union, and did not develo

context in which the Soviet bureaucracy arose.

What remains open is the question of whether the victory of the proletarian revolution in the industrially advanced countries, or in the countries in which the proletariat already represents the absolute majority of the nation, will unleash—both within these countries and on a world scale—a process that can 'de-bureaucratize' the experience of the proletarian revolutions of the twentieth century with a rapidity much more disconcerting than the duration of the phenomenon of bureaucratization itself. Here, history will have the last word. Should it confirm that revolutionary Marxists have been harbouring illusions on this subject, then it would be necessary to draw conclusions about the deeper historical and social roots of bureaucratization different from those generally drawn in the analysis of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and the Fourth International. But it is unjustified, impressionistic and irresponsible to draw these conclusions prematurely, before the evidence is in: especially for Marxists, who are not simply theoreticians or historians, but above all militants, people who intervene with the aim of consciously altering the course of history.

Personally, I continue to think that we will have some very happy surprises in this regard. Given today's conditions, given the relative richness of the economy and the overwhelming numerical weight of the proletariat, with its democratic political traditions and high level of technical and cultural skills, I find it hard to conceive of the repetition in countries like France, Italy, Spain or Britain, not to mention the United States, of anything that could even remotely justify the idea of a transition lasting for centuries, or a centuries-long bureaucratization (even one more benign than that of the ussr), between the fall of capitalism and the advent of a socialist society.

Does a self-managed system not require a certain level of development of the productive forces, that would allow the preconditions for the functioning of such a system to be assembled? And does Marxist theory not have something to say about the economic, political, social and cultural preconditions that would permit these new relations of production to be stabilized, and crystallize into a mode of production?

This question really boils down to two problems. What are the preconditions for withering away of the market economy and money economy? And what are the preconditions for withering away of the social division of labour between producers and administrators? In my view, the present wealth of the most industrially advanced countries would permit rapid attainment of a level of development such that basic material needs could be satisfied to the full. This is the most obvious criterion for the possibility—indeed necessity—for market and monetary categories to wither away. For under these conditions, such categories can be applied only with perverse effects. We can already see evidence of this in the attempt to 'organize' the agricultural abundance of the Common Market on the basis of the market economy. I also believe it would be possible immediately to introduce half-day working. Moreover, this is the material condition—not in itself sufficient, but certainly necessary—for making self-management a reality rather than a

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factories, their neighbourhoods and the state—not to mention federations of socialist states—you can proclaim self-management as much as you want, but there will still be professional politicians, and therefore functionaries, and therefore potential bureaucrats, who will control this management. Well, the conditions for half-day working and for generalized, compulsory university education now exist in all the great industrial countries.

But did they exist in 1920?

No, I am speaking of today.

So in 1920 they did not exist?

Certainly not in Russia.

How about Germany, in 1920?

In the very short term, no. In the medium term, probably. What could the Germany of 1920 have become if there had been a victorious socialist revolution and a merger with the Soviet Union? It is not easy to say. I mention in passing, because it is little known, that preparatory work for manufacture of the first electronic computer was under way in Germany back in the thirties—and this under an extremely reactionary economic and political régime. Given the intellectual forces of Germany, if there had been a socialist régime in the early twenties, it is my guess that fifteen or twenty years could have been gained over capitalism, so far as the third technological revolution is concerned. Let us not forget that Einstein was in Germany, and that the development of nuclear energy-with all its contradictions but also promise for humanity, provided security is given strict priority over cost (not to speak of 'profitability')-could have permitted enormous progress in the context of a socialist Germany and socialist Europe. But all this is guesswork. It is not possible to build hypotheses on it's. Let us talk about what is possible today. Today the potential is there.

Any dialogue between those who indict a betrayed or bankrupt revolution and those who sing the praises of a revolution that has yet to occur must obviously remain uncertain, undecided, doubtful. The hard evidence needed to really convince the sceptics would be a model born of a victorious revolution that was qualitatively superior to what exists in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe or the People's Republic of China today. In a sense, this is what explains the difficulty even for Marxist theory to pronounce the last word on the nature of the user, the nature of the transitional stage, the nature of the problems to be solved and the means by which to solve them. For the test of practice has not yet occurred, in either direction; and the last word in theory will be spoker only after the last word in practice. It is very difficult for theory to anticipate fully what practice has yet to resolve in real life.

In order to isolate the problems of the transitional stage in a concrete way, it may buseful to look at the society that exists in the Soviet Union and to ask some question

form, in the Soviet Union, of the hybrid you said was characteristic of any transitional society? More precisely, how is one to analyse the power of the hurreductacy—which has not only maintained its position over the past thirty years, but actually appears to have widened its sphere of intervention, through repression, its role in the economy, and so on? What is the nature of that power? This poses the problem of the state in the Soviet Union, and in turn the general problem of the state during this transitional period.

Some preliminary remarks are necessary. First of all, this discussion in the West is marked by a great lack of information, which is often compounded by great light-mindedness. More precisely, most of those who discuss the USSR have been unable to approach the socio-economic reality of the country with what Lenin considered one of the basic characteristics of the materialist dialectic, namely die Allstitigkeit [allsidedness the process of taking account of all aspects of a problem, and not isolating certain aspects from others. A whole history of western Sovietology—and I include under this rather pejorative term all the various currents and subcurrents of Marxist thought itself-could be written from this standpoint. Now one aspect, now another has been emphasized, depending on the moment, the pragmatic exigencies of the political struggle, and even personal whims and vulgar self-interest. At one point, stress is laid on the limited character of the productive forces, at another on waste, at another on the contradiction between the low living standards of the population and the immense industrial potential, at yet another on the leaps forward in technology, at another on the enormous technological backwardness, and so on.

Moreover, it is not so much information that is lacking. In order to develop a view that at least aims at being comprehensive, the essential thing is to take the trouble to examine the whole, and to constantly strive to integrate often contradictory elements into a dynamic, overall view of Soviet reality. I am struck by the really lightminded, even irresponsible way in which many western observers speak of the economic crisis supposedly striking the Soviet economy, just as it has struck the western economy'; and by the way in which others (including some who claim to be Marxists) consider unimportant the little difference that, although there has been a terrible new rise of unemployment in all the industrialized countries of the West, there is no unemployment at all in the industrialized countries of Eastern Europe. They escape these difficulties with formulas that are actually nothing but frivolities, diversions without serious theoretical content. They say, for example, 'Yes, but there is concealed unemployment, hidden within the factories, in the Soviet Union'. The only 'difference' is that the Soviet workers continue to be paid, while the unemployed workers in the West are out on the street. And why does the ruling class in the industrialized capitalist. countries, even though these are richer than the Soviet Union, lack the will or ability to eliminate 'manifest' unemployment by replacing it with hidden unemployment? Clearly, all these questions go back to a method of general analysis, and to the inability of all those who refuse to apply it to understand the very complex reality of the Soviet Union.

My second preliminary remark concerns the difficulty of arriving at a prudent assessment of the combination of stability and instability that has

combination. Can we speak of stability? For those who had hoped for a political revolution or a collapse of the régime in the short run, yes, we can. But if we draw the balance-sheet of the twenty-five years since the death of Stalin, there has not been a single year without changes in the Soviet Union of a very important nature, compared with the old image of monolithic immobility. Can it be said that the Soviet Union with the Stalin cult and the Soviet Union without the Stalin cult are exactly the same thing? That the Soviet Union with a living standard for workers comparable, say, to that of Turkey is exactly the same thing as the Soviet Union with wage levels that are now approaching those of Italian workers? Can it be claimed that the Soviet Union which produced only 30 million tons of steel is the same thing as the Soviet Union which is now the world's largest steel producer, producing 20 per cent more per year than the United States? Can it be said that the Soviet Union in which oppositionists were found only in Gulag camps, and the Soviet Union today with its ferment of political currents, samindat and discussion at all sorts of levels (not only among intellectuals, but also in the unions), are one and the same thing? From this standpoint as well, the problem is more complex. But here, in contrast to what I said on the previous point, what is lacking is not so much a method of integrating all this information as the information itself. We have little knowledge of anything in the Soviet Union that is not macro-economic or macro-social. We know the general outlines, the aggregates: things like the industrial production figures, the national income, even the bureaucracy's share in the distribution of the national income, are not so difficult to calculate. All this is more or less known. But we are dealing with a country of 25c million people. This society contains many mini-societies within it. And here we are obviously much less informed. We only perceive certain aspects of reality through sudden revelations; through the light that may from time to time be shed, by some source or other, about what is happening.

Keeping these two preliminary remarks in mind, let us seek to separate out some general trends. Closely related to our analysis of the socio economic reality of the Soviet Union, as a society in a stage of transition between capitalism and socialism, these will enable us to grasp morthoroughly the reality of the relations of production specific to this social formation (not, I repeat, to the transitional period in general).

First of all, I think we must reject as incompatible with reality, as distortion, any idea that there has been a stagnation of the productiv forces in the Soviet Union, a waste that has totally neutralized the effect of planning. I believe that even though there have been repeated crises of declining Soviet economic growth rates, even though there is indee frightful waste (undoubtedly the second count in the indictment of the Soviet bureaucracy, the first being the fact that it stands in the way of sel management of the producers, the toiling portion of the population), the very duration both of the régime and of its economic growth have finall had cumulative effects that it would be absurd to deny—particularly since they represent one of the essential sources of contradiction in the system today, and one of the major reasons why the latter's stability is less securitian ever.

population, on the inadequate level of consumption, although they do contain a kernel of truth, must be used cautiously. Above all, standard of living must not be identified with ease in obtaining food supplies. Since the Soviet Union has become a great industrial power, the modification of the demand and consumption pattern of the workers that occurred in the western capitalist countries has taken place in the ussa too, although with some delay. This means that the permanent shortage of quality agricultural products is considered especially absurd and unacceptable. But it does not mean that living standards have stagnated as a result of this shortage. In the case of many industrial consumer goods—and especially housing (which is not the least important factor), where the situation was disastrous under Stalin and immediately after his death—the cumulative changes of the past twenty-five years have finally had real effects. The demands of Soviet workers today, even in the realm of consumption, are quite different from those traditionally raised in Stalin's day; they point in directions far more comparable to those taken in the industrialized capitalist countries.

In this sense, I believe we must begin by emphasizing—and I know this provokes indignation and hilarity among all revisionist currents—that the relations of production in the Soviet Union are based on a planned organization of large-scale production, a planned organization based on state property (which is a form of social property) in the means of production. There is no doubt about the superiority of this aspect of the Soviet economy, at least in the light of a long-term view that is able to distinguish this general observation from dithyrambic conclusions claiming that what is involved is socialism, that the socialist paradise has come to pass, and other such idiocies. To claim, as do Bettelheim and his school (for they are at the root of it all), that property in the means of production is collectivized only juridically, and that the enterprises actually own a good portion of their means of production, is to misunderstand the reality of Soviet planning and its results. It is to lend phenomena like the black market, or the bureaucracy's illegal appropriation of goods through parallel circuits, decisive weight in the economy. Although these phenomena are undoubtedly real, they do not command such decisive weight.

The great paradox faced by advocates of the view that the bureaucracy is a social class is that they are unable to demonstrate the essential characteristic of any ruling class in a class society, namely the correspondence, the correlation, at least on a general level, between the interests and motivations of the so-called ruling class and the internal logic of the given economic system. There can be no contradiction between the motivation and behaviour of the bulk of the capitalist class and the internal logic of the capitalist system. Otherwise, the whole Marxist analysis of social classes becomes totally incoherent and we would be dealing with a disembodied, reified mode of production completely divorced from living social forces and playing the role of Hegel's Zeitgent.

Now, it is manifest that no such correspondence exists in the Soviet Union. Not only does it not exist, but everything we know about the behaviour and motivation of the bureaucracy, especially those layers of it

control the social surplus product, runs counter to the logic of planned economy. One of the strengths of the revolutionary Marxis Trotskyist—analysis of the social character of the ussn is that it has b able to highlight precisely this aspect of things, on the basis of a speconception of the bureaucracy and its contradictory role in Soviet soci This analysis has grasped the essential fact that we are dealing wit phenomenon which differs, qualitatively and structurally, from that ruling class. Because there is no private property in the means production in the Soviet Union, because the advantages the bureance enjoy are essentially privileges related to their functions and position the hierarchy, and because these advantages always remain precarious very result of the absence of property, it has been impossible for a sys of administration founded on the individual interests of the bureauc to develop any genuine intrinsic rationality. All the reforms in the sysof management of the Soviet economy—which began back in the e thirties with Stalin's introduction of the famous principle of kboyra (the private profitability of enterprises), and which continue up to include the latest counter-reforms (for what is now under way. genuine counter-reform that is eliminating some of the effects of so-called Liberman reforms)—all these forty years of efforts and atten by what could be called the Bonapartist summits of the bureauct (those which attempt to maintain the balance among the vari branches, factions and interest groups within this bureaucracy) overcome this fundamental contradiction of the bureaucratic system h come to nothing. There is no way to find the philosopher's stone t would permit simultaneous satisfaction of both the private interesti the bureaucrats and the needs and requisites of a socialized and plant economy. Hence, every one of these reforms has led to a new form contradiction, which leads in turn to a new reform, which leads to a r manifestation of the contradiction, and so on ad infinitum. This facitself should suffice to indicate that the bureaucracy is not a ruling cle and that the Soviet Union has not produced a stabilized mode production of any sort; for such a situation is unthinkable unde stabilized mode of production. At any rate, there is no histor precedent for such a situation.

For in so far as the bureaucracy attempts to accumulate private prope: it cannot adequately manage a planned economy. And in so far as it has manage the planned economy at least adequately, it cannot give prior to the accumulation of its own material privileges. The error of those w view the bureaucracy as an incarnation of 'the will to accumula 'production for production's own sake', 'the rise of production in he industry at the expense of light industry, or anything of a similar kinthat they have a mystified image of the real Soviet bureaucracy. The may have been some planners, and probably a few political leaders, w had the passion of production for its own sake, of production accumulation. The real bureaucrats, the flesh and blood ones who inha the real world, are doubtless motivated by many passions, but these much more mundane ones than production for production's sake. Th passions are strictly linked to the particular position the bureaucr. occupies in Soviet transitional society and to its very special s contradictory articulation with the system of planned economy.

of Soviet bureaucrats to collective property. But if so the mistake was simply, as so often, one of timing; he noted an embryonic trend and too rapidly considered it already generalized. At all events, it is striking that although on the whole the demands of, say, Soviet managers do not centre on the question of private accumulation, they have nevertheless for more than twenty-five years now been raising a series of questions whose logic undermines the planned economy. When the managers speak of greater rights for directors, what they are aiming at is the right to lay workers off, to set prices, to modify production schedules in conformity with market incentives. It seems quite obvious that demands of this sort contradict the logic of the planned economy, and constitute nothing other than a transitory phase on the road to re-establishment of private property. This was something which Trotsky himself predicted; clearly. the directors of the great automobile or electrical equipment trusts were not going to wake up one day and say 'give us the factories'; it would occur through a whole series of intermediary phases. In this sense, then, we can say that there is a contradiction between, on the one hand, the planned structure and socialized, collective, state character of large-scale production and, on the other, the maintenance of bourgeois norms of distribution—which result essentially from the survival of market and monetary categories in the sphere of the means of consumption, and which are the foundation of the bureaucracy's privileges. The combination of all this with the omnipotence of the bureaucracy, which holds a monopoly on the management of the economy, State and society. constitutes an eminently contradictory element in the relations of it production that obtain in the Soviet Union.

In the light of all this, what is the role and place of the working class in this Soviet society? For at least in the case of a society of the same kind like East Germany, one is strick by the enormous weight of the working class. This weight may be indirect, but it has determined a number of upheavals—including at the political level, the level of management—and now does so in increasingly massive fashion.

I would be cautious with the term 'increasingly massive', because this could almost lead to the idea that we are on the eve of qualitative or automatic corrections. But it is obvious that the situation is very different from that which prevails in the industrially advanced capitalist countries, both in terms of the relationship of social and economic forces and in terms of the bureaucracy's very inability to elaborate its own ideologywhich obliges it not to acknowledge its own power, but to present itself as the representative of the power of the working class. I have already had occasion to call attention to another fundamental paradox of this situation: the fact that the working class, which is proclaimed as the ruling class in all official propaganda, is in reality devoid of all political rights. At the same time, although the working class does not participate in the management of the economy and the State, it nevertheless does command de facto powers and rights, resulting from the October Revolution, which remain considerable. This contradiction must be understood, mastered and its consequences grasped.

Because there is no labour market in the USSR; because it is formally illegal and usually indeed impossible for a Soviet factory director, unlike the

job security is infinitely greater in the ussa (though we should rexaggerate, it is not absolute), Soviet workers find it possible to imposs number of realities in the factories, such as a slower work pace, which not exist in the capitalist countries. And there is a bizarre blend, or again hybrid, of great indifference to individual effort but great interest individual skill—which to some extent is the opposite of what occurs capitalist society.

The two aspects of this contradiction must not be underestimate because they have a very clear social dynamic. According to offic figures (and even though these are exaggerated, they do have sor relation to reality), there are ten million people in Soviet factories today ten million—who hold university degrees or degrees from possecondary technical colleges. This is a considerable percentage of the to number of workers (seventy million) and it is rising from year to ye. This must inevitably have an effect on the self-confidence of the working class. It must inevitably shift the relationship of forces with the bureaucracy, in the context of a society in which the monopoly knowledge was initially an immense weapon in the hands of the privileged. That monopoly is now being undermined by the extraordinary effort at cultural and technical education on the part of the Soviet working class.

How is it that, under such conditions, there should at the same time I indifference to productive effort? This too is not hard to explai Indifference exists precisely to the extent that the mass of producers a deeply convinced that it is useless to make any real effort, who everything is on the one hand strictly controlled from the centre, and the other infinitely disorganized by the bureaucracy's waste as privileges. There is too much risk involved in making any move. Speople opt for the status quo, and simply try to get by as best they can Another factor may also be mentioned, which although secondary is nowithout importance (probably it is more important in Eastern Europethan in the Soviet Union, but even in the latter it has some weight). This the gap between reality and statistics, due to the fact that a good quantity of labour is invested in commodities traded through parallel circuits. The slow work pace in the great enterprises is partly due to the fact that mass skilled workers do other jobs after they go home.

All this said, however, it is nonetheless true that the Soviet working class with its skills, its much higher level of culture and its manifest desire a perfect its technical capacities, is deeply frustrated, deprived as it is of an real participation in the management of the State and the economy. The few, less than modest reforms introduced during the sixties were at mo aimed at introducing a degree of co-management on a few soci questions, like work rules and wages. Moreover, this was comanagement between the trade-union apparatus (in other words fraction of the bureaucracy) and the factory managers; it did not involved general assemblies of union members, which would have been quisanother thing—taking us back to an indirect form of working-class participation in the exercise of power such as existed in the twenties.

the Soviet proletariat against this state of affairs, which must be increasingly intolerable to it? I think there are two main reasons for this. First is the lack of an alternative model; in other words, ideological and L political scepticism, which must be extremely deep. The Soviet working class has been profoundly disappointed by the way the October Revolution turned, through the Stalinist degeneration, towards a model of social leadership which does not meet the workers' needs. The workers have not been attracted to the capitalist model either. But they see no alternative in the world today, no third model. There are no cadres within the Soviet working class able to propose a different model of management. Here Stalin's radical extermination of all Communist opposition tendencies, of all Communist cadres, has had a really disastrous effect. In the absence of any such alternative model, there has been a withdrawal towards private life, immediate demands, higher living standards, even towards individual social advancement through education (the negative side of the race for education, which must not be ignored). All these forms of withdrawal are practically inevitable. The second major reason is that there has been undeniable progress in the standard of living and working conditions of the Soviet workers. This progress, nearly constant since the death of Stalin, i.e. over the past twenty-five years, has generated what may be called a climate within the working class that is more reformist than revolutionary. Temporary explosions may erupt around particular questions, for example when the shortage of food products or the intensification of repression is especially severe. Normally, however, the Soviet workers hope to improve their lot by exerting pressure within the framework of the system rather than by challenging it comprehensively.

It is the combination of these two factors which accounts for the present political passivity of the working class (factors, by the way, which we have seen at work also in advanced capitalist countries). An additional detonator would be necessary to trigger broader explosions: a revolutionary victory in the West; or the development of a more articulate and effective political opposition among non-workers in the Soviet Union, that could succeed in establishing contact and dialogue with the working class; or very deep and explosive contradictions within the bureaucracy itself; or new, more explosive crises in Eastern Europe. Other possibilities could be added, but some supplementary detonator is probably required to alter the situation.

There is one other great unknown: what do young Soviet workers think and how do they see society? I mean workers who have graduated from technical and professional schools during the past five or six years, and who never experienced not just Stalin and de-Stalinization, but even the invasion of Czechoslovakia, which was the last great internal crisis in the bureaucracy's system of domination. This is a big question mark. There may be some surprises here, but for the moment we must not have excessive short-term hopes.

In the light of what you have just said about the Soviet working class, perhaps we could go back to what you were saying earlier about the nature of hureamcracy. I would certainly agree that the hureamcracy cannot be compared to a ruling class in a

wonder about—not in general, but in the context of the specific Soviet social formation—is this: given the prominent role of the State, particularly in the economy, as you have stressed, and given the atomization of the working class, has the bureaucracy not accumulated a body of powers in the economic, social and political domains such that it now stands outside the working class? And does this not mean that the position of Trotsky, who spoke of a workers' bureaucracy, a fraction of the working class through which the dictatorship of the proletariat was exercised in a deformed but real manner, is no longer valid?

If one were to define the bureaucracy as solely the topmost layers of the hierarchy, then it is obvious that any kinship with the working class, either psychological or social, would become increasingly difficult to demonstrate. The relationship would then become purely historical—at best! The only element of Trotsky's definition that would remainthough I think even this would still be decisive, in spite of everythingwould be the mode of remuneration: the fact that the bureaucracy, since it does not own the means of production, participates in distribution of the national income exclusively as a function of remuneration for its labourpower. This entails many privileges, but it is a form of remuneration thatdoes not differ qualitatively from remuneration in the form of a salary. However, although this definition may satisfy theoreticians, above all Marxists who attach key importance to economic phenomena, I would at once concede that it is not very convincing from the psychological and pedagogic standpoint. To explain that the bureaucracy is a workers' bureaucracy solely because the people receiving twenty times the wage of an ordinary worker are still receiving a wage is a highly abstract argument. Even so, as I say, its validity must be recognized, and above all the implication that the bureaucracy would cease to be a workers' bureaucracy as soon as it acquired essential sources of income deriving from property, etc.

But in fact this restrictive definition of the bureaucracy is quite arbitrary and therefore false. Certainly it is not Trotsky's definition, contrary to what is claimed by some of his critics. Such a definition is utterly unable to account for the reality of the bureaucracy's domination. If the bureaucracy could really be reduced to these individuals, a few hundred thousand at most and perhaps only a few tens of thousands, then the enormous control it continues to exercise over society as a whole would be difficult to explain. For the principal instrument of this control during the Stalin era permanent and bloody terror; real fear of loss not only of liberty but of life—manifestly no longer exists to the same extent. As soon, however, as we extend the notion of the bureaucracy to include as it should all the layers in Soviet society that are privileged in one way or another, then we are talking about millions of people: between five and ten million, if not more. This total would include the entire trade-union bureaucracy; the whole officer corps of the armed forces, not just the generals and marshals but also the junior officers; the entire hierarchy of production, not just the directors but also the engineers; and the great majority of the intelligentsia (except teachers, who are paid less than workers and have no material privileges).

As soon as we apply this correct definition of the bureaucracy, then the premises of the previous argument vanish. For it is absolutely certain that

term, are not merely the sons and daughters of workers but even former workers themselves. The upward mobility I referred to earlier, whichwith all its negative aspects—underlies the thirst for education and skills that characterizes a good part of the working class, is essentially mobility towards the bureaucracy. One of the principal weapons the bureaucracy has used to maintain its dictatorship has been precisely this mobility; the fact that it has been able to 'skim the cream' off successive generations of workers, by offering them something the capitalist system cannot. The most that can be offered a worker under the capitalist system is a position intermediary between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. He is certainly not offered the property that would allow him to become head of a great enterprise. The particular structure of society in the Soviet Union enables the bureaucracy to absorb the sons and daughters of workers, and even workers themselves, into the apparatus. Not into the summits of the apparatus, but into positions much higher than those of the so-called middle classes in the advanced capitalist countries.

There is a very interesting and concrete sociological problem connected to this. After the period of industrialization and the first five-year plans, and after the upheavals of the Second World War and de-Stalinization, has this upward mobility continued to function during the past fifteen years in the same way that it did before? Or has it begun to slow downexpecially above a certain level of the hierarchy? There is some interesting evidence about this subject, although I do not know of any statistical data. In particular, all questions related to access to university studies, and to the need in almost all sections of the bureaucracy for university degrees in order to move beyond a certain level, arouse enormous passion. Since the bureaucracy, powerful as it is, is barred from accumulating the private property that could guarantee its privileges, it attempts to transmit these privileges to its own sons and daughters (more, incidentally, to the sons than to the daughters) by assuring their access to its own ranks by virtue of their access to university degrees. This is now introducing a source of deep social conflict. The struggle for admission to universities has become intense. Soviet literature, for example, provides descriptions of this. The day entrance examination results are announced is a day of real social tension in all the university towns of the Soviet Union. The charges of corruption, bribery and nepotism that are made by workers and popular layers on such occasions are much more violent than any charges made about lack of access to the management of enterprises. For this is a more tangible, phenomenological and immediately visible aspect of the bureaucracy's privileges, since it closes off what has hitherto been the essential mechanism of compensation; namely, education and access to upward mobility. Here we can expect even more violent reactions and conflicts in the future. Once again, this shows that although the bureaucracy may try to sever entirely the umbilical cord with its past, the working class and Marxist ideology, it is one thing to try and quite another to succeed. What is involved here is an ongoing process which is far from completed; and it is obvious that there may be very violent reactions.

As you say, there is evidence pointing to a slowdown of social mobility. Upward mobility has been declining for the past fifteen years, perhaps even since the death of Stalin . . .

apparatus which made room for young blood again, though it is only recently that we have received figures on this.

In any event, this reduced upward mobility has occurred around a structural nucleus, which is the entirety of the apparatus of the State and the Party. This leads me to pose a slightly different question, but one that points in the same direction as the previous one. Under these conditions, does the term 'workers' state' any longer have a meaning, once the central nucleus around which power is articulated tends to be external to the working class, which has no political rights whatever? What is the validity of the term 'workers' state' under such conditions, given the expropriation of the working class?

For the past forty years, we in our movement have no longer used the unqualified term 'workers' state' except on a few, limited occasions. We say 'bureaucratically degenerate' or 'bureaucratized workers' state', which is not at all the same thing. Trotsky spoke of a broken-down automobile that had crashed head-on into a wall. The difficulty here is the difference between science and pedagogy. The formula 'bureaucratized workers' state' refers to criteria of the Marxist theory of the state. For Marxism, there is no such thing as a state that stands above classes. The State is in the service of the historic interests of a given social class. If one drops the adjective 'workers', it can be replaced by one of two other terms. It can be called either a bourgeois state, or a state of a bureaucracy that has become a new ruling class. I have already indicated why these definitions are absolutely false, and even more confused-more heavily laden with totally irrational confusion—than that of 'workers' state'. Let me take just one example. If we allow that the bureaucracy is a new class are the Communist Parties in power then 'bureaucratic' parties? Does the class struggle in the capitalist countries then become a triangular conflic among the working class, the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy? Or is the bureaucracy the only class in history that becomes a class only after seizing power, although it was not a class prior to the seizure of power: Was the Chinese Communist Party a workers' party—or a workers' and peasants' party, it matters little—up to the time it seized power, and did i become a bureaucratic party after seizing power? All this leads to absurdities, to a lack of comprehension of world reality today. It makes i impossible to orient oneself in the day-to-day class struggle on a work scale. And this is infinitely more dangerous than the pedagogical o political-pragmatic disadvantage of using the term 'workers' state' to apply to the Soviet state. That said, when the Fourth Internationalfollowing Trotsky-asserts that there is still a bureaucraticalldegenerate workers' state in the Soviet Union, and that in this sense the Soviet Union still preserves a form of dictatorship of the proletariat, 1 does so in a quite precise way which implies no more than it says. Up to now this state has objectively continued to defend the structures, th hybrid relations of production, born of the October Revolution. Thus up to now this state has prevented the restoration of capitalism and th power of a new bourgeois class; it has prevented the re-emergence c capitalist property and capitalist relations of production.

It is only in this sense that we use the adjective 'workers'', But : nevertheless does, of course, have a profound historical meaning, whic

situations. Let us take a particularly revealing historical example. If we draw the balance-sheet on what has been called, somewhat superficially, the epoch of absolute monarchy, we find incontestably that in a good part of Europe this was also the era of the primitive accumulation of capital and the use of the young bourgeoisie; the epoch of the strengthening of this bourgeoisie; in other words, the epoch that paved the way for the bourgeois revolution. At the same time, however, if one views the problem from another standpoint, from the vantage-point of what remained of the semi-feudal aristocracy, it is equally incontestable that absolutism saved this decrepit and degenerate class, enabling it to continue to exist for another two centuries or more. It did this in an extremely simple manner: since the landed incomes of the semi-feudal nobility were less and less adequate to enable the nobility to maintain its lifestyle and habits, the absolute monarchy acted as an enormous 'financial pump' extracting income from the other classes of society, primarily the peasantry and the bourgeoisie, and transferring it to the court nobility in the form of stipends and contributions. It may thus be said that the state of the absolute monarchy was a semi-feudal state, that defended the historic interests of the aristocracy. But to interpret this to mean that this state defended the feudal nobles such as they were or wanted to be-I am referring now not to the twelfth century, but to the sixteenth or seventeenth—is obviously an absurdity. On the contrary, the state attacked them, crushing the Frondes of these nobles throughout Europe with a violence and severity that was not much less intense when all the relevant allowances are made—than the anti-worker repression by the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. Thus, there is a very big difference between, on the one hand, maintaining certain socioeconomic structures historically linked to the interests of a particular social class and, on the other, defending the immediate, daily interests of a social class in the sense of what it itself sees as—and wants to be—its place in society. This is what makes our definition of the Soviet Union as a! bureaucratically degenerate workers' state correct both historically and theoretically.

It is, nonetheless, true that this definition is difficult to understand and assimilate for anyone who approaches the problem not with these criteria but with simple common sense. Obviously, for simple common sense it is absurd to say that the dictatorship of the proletariat exists in the Soviet Union, since the immense majority of the proletariat exercises not only no dictatorship but not even any power. And if one interprets 'dictatorship of the proletariat' to mean 'direct government by the working class', then this dictatorship certainly does not exist. For us, the dictatorship of the proletariat exists in the Soviet Union only in the derived, indirect and socio-theoretical sense of the term. Here again, though, I think the dispute is purely semantic and not very interesting. For as soon as the labels are abandoned and one is compelled to use more detailed and nuanced circumlocutions, one returns to the real problems, which are not problems of labels. What is the place of the bureaucracy in Soviet society? Is it the same as the place of a ruling class? By what methods can the bureaucracy stabilize its power and privileges indefinitely? Are these the same methods as those employed by a ruling class? Is it possible for the working class to alter the situation? Does it need a thorough overturn of

power, which will certainly entail considerable economic consequences but is still different from a social revolution? When one becomes more concrete, specific and precise, the differences do not at all disappear. On the contrary, their real meaning emerges. Then it is not a matter of differences in labels, terms or concepts, but differences in interpretation of contradictory aspects of Soviet society and in the political conclusions drawn from the assessment of these phenomena.

The manifestly contradictory situation of the bureaucracy, and in particular its internal contradictions, pose a very practical question (though it is unfortunately not a burning one right now): what is the nature of the anti-bureaucratic revolution? Here again a number of problems arise, particularly in connection with the term 'political revolution'. Trotsky advanced a single definition, but with points of reference that were not always identical. In The Revolution Betrayed be compared the political revolution to 1830 and 1848 in France and to 1918 in Germany. He made other comparisons too, but he kept coming back to these. In other words, changes effected with a certain mobilization of the masses, but without fundamentally modifying the structures of the state apparatus. On the other handand this was the object of a rather lively discussion in the Fourth International, at least before the war—during the same period Trotsky argued that the bureaucracy must be expelled from the regenerated soviets. This raises the problem of whether use of the term 'political revolution' has not been the source of some ambiguities. For in the past a number of comrades most of whom, incidentally, were moving away from Trotsky's definition—have suggested that transformation of the Soviet Union will come about through pressure on the bureaucracy, and even through its self-reform. Consequently, is it not crucial to insist on the content of this revolution, which will eventually lead, whatever the intermediary steps, to the destruction of the state apparatus as it presently exists; to elimination of the bureaucracy from the soviets; and to the establishment of a new formula of management and therefore of planning while at the same time maintaining centralized planning. Is it not better to stress the content of this anti-bureaucratic revolution, rather than the term 'political revolution', which can give rise to ambiguity?

I think the ambiguity lies not in the term 'political revolution', but in the peculiarity of a political revolution in a workers' state, which by definition, even if it is bureaucratized, is a state whose economic weight is exceptional. As a result, even a revolution that is 'purely political' (an absurd concept in any event) will obviously have socio-economic effects infinitely greater than those of a bourgeois political revolution. The latter at most replaces one faction of the bourgeoisie in power by another, and in no way modifies the system of private property, capitalist competition, exploitation of the working class, etc.

I must say that the characteristics you ascribe to the political revolution remain a bit imprecise. In my opinion, the best definition of political revolution would be simply this: a takeover of the management of the state, the economy and all spheres of social activity by the mass of producers and the toiling masses, in the form of the power of democratically elected workers' councils, soviets. The term 'expulsion of the bureaucracy from the soviets' is itself ambiguous, for its meaning depends on how broadly the notion of bureaucracy is defined. It threatens once again to limit the freedom of choice, the political freedom, of the

As the Transitional Programme says, the workers must be tree to elect anyone they want to the soviets, without restriction or exclusion. This requires a multi-party system and the establishment of political and personal freedoms much broader than have ever existed in the Soviet Union, except during the initial period just after the October Revolution It implies, among other things, experimentation with a whole series of new forms of the exercise of power. It matters little to talk about 'dismantling' the state apparatus. Self-management, even democratically centralized and planned self-management, is inconceivable unless a good part of the central state apparatus that now exists in the Soviet Union is dismantled; but the state apparatus is not solely this central apparatus.

Once this content is defined, we can see whether there are basic differences or mere terminological disputes. The latter are uninteresting. for they remain abstract. The basic differences are related to different analyses of Soviet reality, to different views of what workers' power and the real dictatorship of the proletariat should be. One of these differences probably relates to the capacities and limits of the working class. Here too, the historical dimension, historical relativity, must never be forgotten. There is no companson between the working class of the Soviet Union today and the working class of 1937, 1927 or 1917. It is different not only numerically, where there has been a considerable growth, and from the standpoint of political and class consciousness, where there has been an enormous regression. It is also different in its educational level: its technical, cultural and administrative capacity to take over management of the economy and the state. What was extremely difficult after the October Revolution, with the working class of that epoch, is much easier today.

It remains to be seen which detonators, external and internal, can set the Soviet proletariat on the road to class consciousness again. If this does not occur at all, then the debate 'political revolution or social revolution' becomes absolutely useless anyway, because then the real problem will be counter-revolution, trying to prevent a counter-revolution. If, however, our expectations turn out to be realistic—and there are many indications that they are in fact realistic—then the question of whether what we shall have seen was actually a political revolution, a social revolution, a combination of the two, or neither the one nor the other, will be of no real interest. We will simply have to note the close of this historical chapter with great pleasure and a sigh of relief. It is an interval of history that has cost humanity dear, the international communist movement most of all; one which continues to cost the world socialist revolution dear; but one which the Soviet and world proletariats will have then brought to a definitive close.

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Surrealism: the Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia

ntellectual currents can generate a sufficient head of water for the critic to instal is power station on them. The necessary gradient, in the case of Surrealism, is roduced by the difference in intellectual level between France and Germany. That sprang up in 1919 in France in a small circle of literati—we shall give the 10st important names at once: André Breton, Louis Aragon, Philippe Soupault, obert Desnos, Paul Eluard—may have been a meagre stream, fed on the damp oredom of postwar Europe and the last trickle of French decadence. The knowls who even today have not advanced beyond the 'authentic origins' of the 10vement, and even now have nothing to say about it except that yet another ique of literati is here mystifying the honourable public, are a little like a 11thering of experts at a spring who, after lengthy deliberation, arrive at the 11th paltry stream will never drive turbines.

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he German observer is not standing at the head of the stream. That is his prortunity. He is in the valley. He can gauge the energies of the movement. As a

precisely, with that of the numanistic concept of freedom; and he knows how frantic is the determination that has awakened in the movement to go beyond the stage of eternal discussion and, at any price, to reach s decision; he has had direct experience of its highly exposed position between an anarchistic Fronde and a revolutionary discipline, and so ha no excuse for taking the movement for the 'artistic', 'poetic' one i superficially appears. If it was such at the outset, it was, however precisely at the outset that Breton declared his intention of breaking with a praxis that presents the public with the literary precipitate of a certain form of existence while withholding that existence itself. Stated more briefly and dialectically, this means that the sphere of poetry was here explored from within by a closely knit circle of people pushing the 'poetic life' to the utmost limits of possibility. And they can be taken at their word when they assert that Rimbaud's Saison en enfer no longer had an secrets for them. For this book is indeed the first document of the movement (in recent times; earlier precursors will be discussed later) Can the point at issue be more definitively and incisively presented that by Rimbaud himself in his personal copy of the book? In the margin beside the passage 'on the silk of the seas and the arctic flowers', he late wrote, 'There's no such thing.'

In just how inconspicuous and peripheral a substance the dialectica kernel that later grew into Surrealism was originally embedded, wa shown by Aragon in 1924—at a time when its development could not ye be foreseen—in his Vague de rêres. Today it can be foreseen. For there i no doubt that the heroic phase, whose catalogue of heroes Aragon left u in that work, is over. There is always, in such movements, a momen when the original tension of the secret society must either explode in matter-of-fact, profane struggle for power and domination, or decay as public demonstration and be transformed. Surrealism is in this phase c transformation at present. But at the time when it broke over its founder as an inspiring dream wave, it seemed the most integral, conclusive absolute of movements. Everything with which it came into contact ws integrated. Life only seemed worth living where the threshold betwee waking and sleeping was worn away in everyone as by the steps (multitudinous flooding back and forth. Language only seemed itse where sound and image, image and sound interpenetrated with automati precision and such felicity that no chink was left for the penny-in-the-sle called 'meanings'. Image and language take precedence. Saint-Pol Rou: retiring to bed about daybreak, fixes a notice on his door: Poet at work Breton notes: 'Quietly. I want to pass where no one yet has passed quietly!-After you, dearest language.' Language takes precedence.

Not only before meaning. Also before the self. In the world's structured dream loosens individuality like a bad tooth. This loosening of the self lintoxication is, at the same time, precisely the fruitful, living experience that allowed these people to step outside the domain of intoxication. The sent the place to give an exact definition of Surrealist experience. Be anyone who has perceived that the writings of this circle are not literature but something else—demonstrations, watchwords, documents, bluff forgeries if you will, but at any rate not literature—will also know, for the same reason, that the writings are concerned literally with experience

by no means limited to dreams, hours of hashish eating, or opium smoking. It is a cardinal error to believe that, of 'Surrealist experiences'. we know only religious ecstasies or the ecstasies of drugs. The opium of the people, Lenin called religion, and brought the two things closer together than the Surrealists could have liked. I shall refer later to the bitter, passionate revolt against Catholicism in which Rimbaud, Lautréamont and Apollinaire brought Surrealism into the world. But the true, creative overcoming of religious illumination certainly does not lie in narcotics. It resides in a profane illumination, a materialistic, anthropological inspiration, to which hashish, opium, or whatever else can give an introductory lesson. (But a dangerous one; and the religious lesson is stricter.) This profane illumination did not always find the Surrealists equal to it, or to themselves, and the very writings that proclaim it most powerfully, Aragon's incomparable Paysan de Paris and Breton's Nadja, show very disturbing symptoms of deficiency. For example, there is in Nadja an excellent passage on the 'delightful days spent looting Paris under the sign of Sacco and Vanzetti'; Breton adds the assurance that in those days Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle fulfilled the strategic promise of revolt that had always been implicit in its name. But Madame Sacco also appears, not the wife of Fuller's victim but a poyante, a fortuneteller who lives at 3 rue des Usines and tells Paul Eluard that he can expect no good from Nadja. Now I concede that the breakneck career of Surrealism over rooftops, lightning conductors, gutters, verandas, weathercocks, stucco work-all ornaments are grist to the cat burglar's mill—may have taken it also into the humid backroom of spiritualism. But I am not pleased to hear it cautiously tapping on the windowpanes to inquire about its future. Who would not wish to see these adoptive children of revolution most rigorously severed from all the goings-on in the conventicles of down-at-heel downgers, retired majors, and émigré profiteers?

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In other respects Breton's book illustrates well a number of the basic characteristics of this 'profane illumination'. He calls Nadja '2 book with a banging door'. (In Moscow I lived in a hotel in which almost all the rooms were occupied by Tibetan lamas who had come to Moscow for a congress of Buddhist churches. I was struck by the number of doors in the corridors that were always left ajar. What had at first seemed accidental began to be disturbing. I found out that in these rooms lived members of a sect who had sworn never to occupy closed rooms. The shock I had then must be felt by the reader of Nadja.) To live in a glass house is a revolutionary virtue par excellence. It is also an intoxication, a moral exhibitionism, that we badly need. Discretion concerning one's own existence, once an aristocratic virtue, has become more and more an affair of petit-bourgeois parvenus. Nadja has achieved the true, creative synthesis between the art novel and the rowan-d-claf.

Moreover, one need only take love seriously to recognize in it, too—25 Nadya also indicates—2 'profane illumination'. 'At just that time' (i.e. when he knew Nadya), the author tells us, I took a great interest in the epoch of Louis VII, because it was the time of the "courts of love", and I tried to picture with great intensity how people saw life then.' We have from a recent author quite exact information on Provençal love poetry,

the poets of the "new style", Erich Auerbach points out in his excellent Dante: Post of the Secular World, 'possess a mystical beloved, they all have approximately the same very curious experience of love; to them all Amor bestows or withholds gifts that resemble an illumination more that sensual pleasure; all are subject to a kind of secret bond that determines their inner and perhaps also their outer lives.' The dialectics of intoxication are indeed curious. Is not perhaps all ecstasy in one world humiliating sobriety in that complementary to it? What is it that courtly Minner seeks—and it, not love, binds Breton to the telepathic girl—if no to make chastity, too, a transport? Into a world that borders not only or tombs of the Sacred Heart or alters to the Virgin, but also on the morning before a battle or after a victory.

The lady, in esoteric love, matters least. So, too, for Breton. He is close to the things that Nadja is close to than to her. What are these things Nothing could reveal more about Surrealism than their canon. When shall I begin? He can boast an extraordinary discovery. He was the first to perceive the revolutionary energies that appear in the 'outmoded', in th first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, the objects that have begun to be extinct, grand pianos, the dresses of fiv years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb fron them. The relation of these things to revolution—no one can have a mor exact concept of it than these authors. No one before these visionaries and augurs perceived how destitution—not only social but architectonic, th poverty of interiors, enslaved and enslaving objects—can be suddenl transformed into revolutionary nihilism. Leaving aside Aragon's Passas de l'Opera, Breton and Nadja are the lovers who convert everything the we have experienced on mournful railway journeys (railways ar beginning to age), on Godforsaken Sunday afternoons in the proletaria quarters of the great cities, in the first glance through the rain-blurre window of a new apartment, into revolutionary experience, if not action They bring the immense forces of 'atmosphere' concealed in these thing to the point of explosion. What form do you suppose a life would take that was determined at a decisive moment precisely by the street song las on everyone's lips?

The trick by which this world of things is mastered—it is more proper t speak of a trick than a method—consists in the substitution of a politic. for a historical view of the past. 'Open, graves, you, the dead of th picture galleries, corpses behind screens, in palaces, castles, an monasteries, here stands the fabulous keeper of the keys holding a bunc of the keys to all times, who knows where to press the most artful loc and invites you to step into the midst of the world of today, to ming with the bearers of burdens, the mechanics whom money ennobles, t make yourself at home in their automobiles, which are beautiful: armour from the age of chivalry, to take your place in the internation sleeping cars, and to weld yourself to all the people who today are sti proud of their privileges. But civilization will give them short shrift This speech was attributed to Apollinaire by his friend Henri Hert Apollinaire originated this technique. In his volume of novella L'biristarque, he used it with Machiavellian calculation to blo Catholicism (to which he inwardly clung) to smithereens.

objects, the city of Paris itself. But only revolt completely exposes its Surrealist face (deserted streets in which whistles and shots dictate the outcome). And no face is surrealistic in the same degree as the true face of a city. No picture by de Chirico or Max Ernst can match the sharp elevations of the city's inner strongholds, which one must overrun and occupy in order to master their fate and, in their fate, in the fate of their masses, one's own. Nadja is an exponent of these masses and of what inspires them to revolution: 'The great living, sonorous unconsciousness that inspires my only convincing acts, in the sense that I always want to prove that it commands forever everything that is mine.' Here, therefore, we find the catalogue of these fortifications, from Place Maubert, where as nowhere else dirt has retained all its symbolic power, to the 'Théâtre Moderne', which I am inconsolable not to have known. But in Breton's description of the bar on the upper floor-it is quite dark, with arbours like impenetrable tunnels—a drawing room on the bottom of a lake' there is something that brings back to my memory that most uncomprehended room in the old Princess Café. It was the back room on the first floor, with couples in the blue light. We called it 'The Anatomy School'; it was the last restaurant designed for love. In such passages in Breton, photography intervenes in a very strange way. It makes the streets, gates, squares of the city into illustrations of a trashy novel, draws off the banal obviousness of this ancient architecture to inject it with the most pristine intensity toward the events described, to which, as in old chambermaids' books, word-for-word quotations with page numbers refer. And all the parts of Paris that appear here are places where what is between these people turns like a revolving door.

The Surrealists' Paris, too, is a 'little universe'. That is to say, in the larger one, the cosmos, things look no different. There, too, are crossroads where ghostly signals flash from the traffic, and inconceivable analogies and connections between events are the order of the day. It is the region from which the lyric poetry of Surrealism reports. And this must be noted if only to counter the obligatory misunderstanding of last pour last. For art's sake was scarcely ever to be taken literally, it was almost always a flag under which sailed a cargo that could not be declared because it still lacked a name. This is the moment to embark on a work that would illuminate as has no other the crisis of the arts that we are witnessing: a history of esoteric poetry. Nor is it by any means fortuitous that no such work yet exists. For written as it demands to be written—that is, not as a collection to which particular 'specialists' all contribute 'what is most worth knowing' from their fields, but as the deeply grounded composition of an individual who, from inner compulsion, portrays less a historical evolution than a constantly renewed, primal upsurge of esoteric poetry-written in such a way it would be one of those scholarly. confessions that can be counted in every country. The last page would have to show an X-ray picture of Surrealism. Breton indicates in his Introduction an discours sur le peu de réalité how the philosophical realism of the Middle Ages was the basis of poetic experience. This realism, however—that is, the belief in a real, separate existence of concepts whether outside or inside things has always very quickly crossed over from the logical realm of ideas to the magical realm of words. And it is as magical experiments with words, not as artistic dabbling, that we must

games that have run through the whole literature of the avant-garde for the past fifteen years, whether it is called Futurism, Dadaism, or Surrealism. How slogans, magic formulas, and concepts are here intermingled is shown by the following words of Apollinaire's from his last manifesto, L'esprit nonveau et les poètes. He says, in 1918: For the speed and simplicity with which we have all become used to referring by a single word to such complex entities as a crowd, a nation, the universe, there is no modern equivalent in literature. But today's writers fill this gap; their synthetic works create new realities the plastic manifestations of which are just as complex as those referred to by the words standing for collectives.' If, however, Apollinaire and Breton advance even more energetically in the same direction and complete the linkage of Surrealism to the outside world with the declaration, 'The conquests of science rest far more on a surrealistic than on a logical thinking'-if, in other words, they make mystification, the culmination of which Breton sees in poetry (which is defensible), the foundation of scientific and technical development, too then such integration is too imperuous. It is very instructive to compare the movement's overprecipitous embrace of the uncomprehended miracle of machines—'the old fables have for the most part been realized, now it is the turn of poets to create new ones that the inventors on their side can then again make real' (Apollinaire)—tc compare these overheated fantasies with the well-ventilated utopias of a Scheerbart.

'The thought of all human activity makes me laugh.' This utterance or Aragon's shows very clearly the path Surrealism had to follow from its origins to its politicization. In his excellent essay 'La révolution et le intellectuals', Pierre Naville, who originally belonged to this group, rightly called this development dialectical. In the transformation of a highly contemplative attitude into revolutionary opposition, the hostility of the bourgeoisie toward every manifestation of radical intellectual freedon played a leading part. This hostility pushed Surrealism to the left Political events, above all the war in Morocco, accelerated the development. With the manifesto Intellectuals Against the Moroccai War', which appeared in L'Humanité, a fundamentally different platforn was gained from that which was characterized by, for example, th famous scandal at the Saint-Pol Roux banquet. At that time, shortly afte the war, when the Surrealists, who deemed the celebration for a poet the worshipped compromised by the presence of nationalistic elements, burs out with the cry 'Long live Germany', they remained within th boundaries of scandal, towards which, as is known, the bourgeoisie is a thick-skinned as it is sensitive to all action. There is remarkabl agreement between the ways in which, under such political auspice: Apollinaire and Aragon saw the future of the poet. The chapter Persecution' and 'Murder' in Apollinaire's Poète assassiné contain th famous description of a pogrom against poets. Publishing houses at stormed, books of poems thrown on the fire, poets lynched. And the sam scenes are taking place at the same time all over the world. In Aragoi Imagination', in anticipation of such horrors, calls its company to a la crusade.

To understand such prophecies, and to assess strategically the line arrive at by Surrealism, one must investigate the mode of thought widesprea

manifests itself clearly enough in the present Russian orientation of these circles. We are not of course referring here to Béraud, who pioneered the lie about Russia, or to Fabre-Luce, who trots behind him like a devoted donkey, loaded with every kind of bourgeois ill will. But how problematic is even the typical mediating book by Duhamel. How difficult to bear is the strained uprightness, the forced animation and sincerity of the Protestant method, dictated by embarrassment and linguistic ignorance, of placing things in some kind of symbolic illumination. How revealing his résumé: 'the true, deeper revolution, which could in some sense transform the substance of the Slavonic soul itself, has not yet taken place'. It is typical of these left-wing French intellectuals exactly as it is of their Russian counterparts, too-that their positive function derives entirely from a feeling of obligation, not to the Revolution, but to traditional culture. Their collective achievement, as far as it is positive, approximates conservation. But politically and economically they must always be considered a potential source of sabotage.

Characteristic of this whole left-wing bourgeois position is its irremediable coupling of idealistic morality with political practice. Only in contrast to the helpless compromises of 'sentiment' are certain central features of Surrealism, indeed of the Surrealist tradition, to be understood. Little has happened so far to promote this understanding. The seduction was too great to regard the Satanism of a Rimbaud and a Lautréamont as a pendant to art for art's sake in an inventory of snobbery. If, however, one resolves to open up this romantic dummy, one finds something usable inside. One finds the cult of evil as a political device, however romantic, to disinfect and isolate against all moralizing dilettantism. Convinced of this, and coming across the scenario of a horror play by Breton that centres about a violation of children, one might perhaps go back a few decades. Between 1865 and 1875 a number of great anarchists, without knowing of one another, worked on their infernal machines. And the astonishing thing is that independently of one another each set the clock at exactly the same hour, and forty years later in Western Europe the writings of Dostoyevsky, Rimbaud, and Lautréamont exploded at the same time. One might, to be more exact, select from Dostoyevsky's entire work the one episode that was actually not published until about 1915, 'Stavrogin's Confession' from The Possessed. This chapter, which touches very closely on the third canto of the Chants de Maldoror, contains a justification of evil in which certain motifs of Surrealism are more powerfully expressed than by any of its present spokesmen. For Stavrogin is a Surrealist avant la lettre. No one else understood, as he did, how naïve is the view of the Philistines that goodness, for all the manly virtue of those who practice it, is Godinspired; whereas evil stems entirely from our spontaneity, and in it we are independent and self-sufficient beings. No one else saw inspiration, as he did, in even the most ignoble actions, and precisely in them. He considered vileness itself as something preformed, both in the course of the world and also in ourselves, to which we are disposed if not called, as the bourgeois idealist sees virtue. Dostoyevsky's God created not only heaven and earth and man and beast, but also baseness, vengeance, cruelty. And here, too, he gave the devil no opportunity to meddle in his

they are perhaps not 'splendid', but eternally new, 'as on the first day', separated by an infinity from the cliches through which sin is perceived by the Philistine.

The pitch of tension that enabled the poets under discussion to achieve at a distance their astonishing effects is documented quite scurrilously in the letter Isidore Ducasse addressed to his publisher on 23 October 1869, in an attempt to make his poetry look acceptable. He places himself in the line of descent from Mickiewicz, Milton, Southey, Alfred de Musset, Baudelaire, and says: 'Of course, I somewhat swelled the note to bring something new into this literature that, after all, only sings of despair in order to depress the reader and thus make him long all the more intensely for goodness as a remedy. So that in the end one really sings only of goodness, only the method is more philosophical and less naïve than that of the old school, of which only Victor Hugo and a few others are still alive.' But if Lautréamont's erratic book has any lineage at all, or, rather, can be assigned one, it is that of insurrection. Soupault's attempt, in his edition of the complete works in 1927, to write a political curriculum vitae for Isidore Ducasse was, therefore, a quite understandable and not unperceptive venture. Unfortunately, there is no documentation for it, and that adduced by Soupault rests on a confusion. On the other hand, and happily, a similar attempt in the case of Rimbaud was successful, and it is the achievement of Marcel Coulon to have defended the poet's true image against the Catholic usurpation by Claudel and Berrichon. Rimbaud is indeed a Catholic, but he is one, by his own account, in the most wretched part of himself, which he does not tire of denouncing and consigning to his own and everyone's hatred, his own and everyone's contempt: the part that forces him to confess that he does not understand revolt. But that is the concession of a communard dissatisfied with his own contribution who, by the time he turned his back on poetry, hac long since—in his earliest work—taken leave of religion. 'Hatred, to voi I have entrusted my treasure', he writes in the Saison on onfor. This is another dictum around which a poetics of Surrealism might grow like s climbing plant, to sink its roots deeper than the theory of 'surprised creation originated by Apollinaire, to the depth of the insights of Poe.

Since Bakunin, Europe has lacked a radical concept of freedom. The Surrealists have one. They are the first to liquidate the sclerotic liberal moral-humanistic ideal of freedom, because they are convinced tha 'freedom, which on this earth can only be bought with a thousand of the hardest sacrifices, must be enjoyed unrestrictedly in its fullness withou any kind of pragmatic calculation, as long as it lasts.' And this proves to them that 'mankind's struggle for liberation in its simplest revolutionar form (which, however, is liberation in every respect), remains the only cause worth serving.' But are they successful in welding this experience of freedom to the other revolutionary experience that we have to acknowledge because it has been ours, the constructive, dictatorial side o revolution? In short, have they bound revolt to revolution? How are we to imagine an existence orientated solely toward Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle, in rooms by Le Corbusier and Oud?

about which Surrealism circles in all its books and enterprises. This it may call its most particular task. For them it is not enough that, as we know, an ecstatic component lives in every revolutionary act. This component is identical with the anarchic. But to place the accent exclusively on it would be to subordinate the methodical and disciplinary preparation for revolution entirely to a praxis oscillating between fitness exercises and celebration in advance. Added to this is an inadequate, undialectical conception of the nature of intoxication. The aesthetic of the painter, the poet, en état de surprise, of art as the reaction of one surprised, is enmeshed in a number of pernicious romantic prejudices. Any serious exploration of occult, surrealistic, phantasmagoric gifts and phenomena presupposes a dialectical intertwinement to which a romantic turn of mind is impervious. For histrionic or fanatical stress on the mysterious side of the mysterious takes us no further; we penetrate the mystery only to the degree that we recognize it in the everyday world, by virtue of a dialectical optic that perceives the everyday as impenetrable, the impenetrable as everyday. The most passionate investigation of telepathic phenomena, for example, will not teach us half as much about reading (which is an eminently telepathic process), as the profane illumination of reading about telepathic phenomena. And the most passionate investigation of the hashish trance will not teach us half as much about thinking (which is eminently narcotic), as the profane illumination of thinking about the hashish trance. The reader, the thinker, the loiterer. the flameur, are types of illuminati just as much as the opium eater, the dreamer, the ecstatic. And more profune. Not to mention that most terrible drug—ourselves—which we take in solitude.

'To win the energies of intoxication for the revolution'—in other words, poetic politics? 'We have tried that beverage. Anything, rather than that!' Well, it will interest you all the more how much an excursion into poetry clarifies things. For what is the programme of the bourgeois parties? A bad poem on springtime, filled to bursting with metaphors. The socialist sees that 'finer future of our children and grandchildren' in a condition in which all act 'as if they were angels', and everyone has as much 'as if he were rich', and everyone lives 'as if he were free'. Of angels, wealth, freedom, not a trace. These are mere images. And the stock imagery of these poets of the social-democratic associations? Their gradus ad parnassum? Optimism. A very difficult air is breathed in the Naville essay that makes the 'organization of pessimism' the call of the hour. In the name of his literary friends he delivers an ultimatum in face of which this unprincipled, dilettantish optimism must unfailingly show its true colours: where are the conditions for revolution? In the changing of attitudes or of external circumstances? That is the cardinal question that determines the relation of politics to morality and cannot be glossed over. Surrealism has come ever closer to the Communist answer. And that means pessimism all along the line. Absolutely. Mistrust in the fate of literature, mistrust in the fate of freedom, mistrust in the fate of European humanity, but three times mistrust in all reconciliation: between classes, between nations, between individuals. And unlimited trust only in I. G. Farben and the peaceful perfection of the air force. But what now, what next?

Aragon's last book, required a distinction between metaphor and image, a happy insight into questions of style that needs extending. Extension: nowhere do these two-metaphor and image-collide so drastically and so irreconcilably as in politics. For to organize pessimism means nothing other than to expel moral metaphor from politics and to discover in political action a sphere reserved one hundred per cent for images. This image sphere, however, can no longer be measured out by contemplation. If it is the double task of the revolutionary intelligentsia to overthrow the intellectual predominance of the bourgeoisie and to make contact with the proletarian masses, the intelligentsia has failed almost entirely in the second part of this task because it can no longer be performed contemplatively. And yet this has hindered hardly anybody from approaching it again and again as if it could, and calling for proletarian poets, thinkers, and artists. To counter this, Trotsky had to point out—as early as Literature and Revolution—that such artists would only emerge from a victorious revolution. In reality it is far less a matter of making the artist of bourgeois origin into a master of 'proletarian art' than of deploying him, even at the expense of his artistic activity, as important points in this sphere of imagery. Indeed, might not perhaps the interruption of his 'artistic career' be an essential part of his new function?

The jokes he tells are the better for it. And he tells them better. For in the joke, too, in invective, in misunderstanding, in all cases where an action puts forth its own image and exists, absorbing and consuming it, when nearness looks with its own eyes, the long-sought image sphere is opened, the world of universal and integral actualities, where the 'bes room' is missing—the sphere, in a word, in which political materialisn and physical nature share the inner man, the psyche, the individual, o whatever else we wish to throw to them, with dialectical justice, so tha no limb remains unrent. Nevertheless-indeed, precisely after sucl dialectical annihilation—this will still be a sphere of images and, mon concretely, of bodies. For it must in the end be admitted: metaphysical materialism, of the brand of Vogt and Bukharin, as is attested by the experience of the Surrealists, and earlier of Hebel, Georg Büchner Nietzsche, and Rimbaud, cannot lead without rupture to anthropologica materialism. There is a residue. The collective is a body, too. And th physis that is being organized for it in technology can, through all it political and factual reality, only be produced in that image sphere to which profane illumination initiates us. Only when in technology bod and image so interpenetrate that all revolutionary tension becomes bodil collective innervation, and all the bodily innervations of the collective become revolutionary discharge, has reality transcended itself to th extent demanded by the Communist Manifesto. For the moment, only th Surrealists have understood its present commands. They exchange, to man, the play of human features for the face of an alarm clock that in eac minute rings for sixty seconds.

Translated by Edmond Jepbco.



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On the Greek Elections

he Greek general election of November 1977 has not only brought profound hanges in the political map of Greece, it has also resulted in a configuration of olitical forces which is unique in the context of European politics. For Greece self, the exceptional significance of the elections lies in the fact that the 'liberal ersus conservative' cleavage within the bourgeoisie, which has dominated most f the country's parliamentary history, has finally given way to a more profound lass polarization. For the first time since the Civil War, one can now speak of ass divisions having a real reflection in the composition of parliamentary blocs. or Andreas Papandreou's Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), the major ctor (in relative terms), has by its partial mobilization of the rural population of the urban petty bourgeoisie seriously challenged the traditional political armations of the Greek ruling class with their inter-class support. Moreover, the combined electoral forces of the Left gained some 38 per cent of the vote; is means that the possibility can be seriously envisaged that in the not so istant future the Left may come to governmental power through parliamentary

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interrupt the process). Such developments immediately bring to mind the comparable possibilities in France, Italy and Spain. However, as I shall argue below, the electoral failure of the (Eurocommunist) Communist Party of the Interior, and the presence of strong populist elements in PASOK, give a very distinctive profile to the left-wing forces in Greece, different from those to be found elsewhere in Europe.*

The Electoral Results

Despite its comfortable majority in Parliament, Karamanlis's right-wing ruling party New Democracy (ND) decided to organize the second parliamentary elections since the fall of the Junta well before the expiry of its four-year mandate in 1978. The official reasons given for this precipitate move were that such fundamental national issues as the ongoing eec negotiations and Greece's differences with Turkey could only be dealt with effectively by a government enjoying a renewed popular mandate. However, the real reason seems to have more to do with the government's calculation that the economic situation—which after a partial recovery from the 1974 world crisis had entered a new phast of recession after March 1977—could not but deteriorate further in 1978 given among other things the increasing unwillingness of private capita to step up its very low rate of investment.¹

Whatever the reasons which made Karamanlis decide on an early election, his expectation of maintaining or even increasing the vote he had won in 1974 was rudely shattered by PASOK'S unforeseen advance Before proceeding to analyse or interpret the election results, an overal picture is needed of the distribution of votes as compared to 1974; this is given in Table 1. (It should be noted that there is an important discrepancy between the distribution of votes and that of seats, due to the complicated system of 'reinforced proportional representation', which powerfully favours those parties getting more than 17 per cent of the tota vote.)

The salient features of the 1977 election results, as Table 1 at once make clear, are: 1. the relative shrinking of ND, which benefited not only pasor but also the extreme right-wing Nationalist Front; 2. the spectacula advance of pasok and the drastic decline of Mavros's EDHK, the libera centre party; 3. the rout of the Alliance of Progressive and Left-wing Forces (within which the Communist Party of the Interior was the majo partner), and the dominance of the (Moscow-orientated) Communis Party of Greece over the traditional Communist Left as a whole.

The Communist Left

Let us start our analysis from the left of the political spectrum. It is welknown that since 1968 the Greek communists have been split into two

^{*}I wish to thank George Derulia, Nikiforos Diamantouros, Nicos Economou and Elis Nicolacopoulos for their very valuable comments

¹ For instance, after a decrease of 10-8 per cent in 1974, industrial output rose by 4-3 per cei in 1975 and 8-2 per cent in 1976, but in the first semester of 1977 it only went up by 1-4 per cent. See S. Papaspillopoulos, 'Elections Greques', Fany, No. 26

Results of 1977 and 1974 Greek Elections (1974 results are given in parentheses; parties or alliences which fought the 1974 elections under different names from 1977 are in italics.)

	Number of votes	%	Seats
National Front (EP)	349,851	6-82	1
National Democratic Union (EDE)	(54,162)	(1.10)	_
New Democracy (ND)	2,146,687	41.85	172
	(2,670,804)	(54-37)	(220)
Neo-Liberal Party	55,560	1-0\$	2
Union of the Democratic Centre (KDHK)	613,113	11-95	15
Contre Umon-New Forces (EK-ND)	(1,002,908)	(20-52)	(6ó)
Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOE)	-1,299,196	25.33	93
	(666,806)	(13.58)	(12)
Alliance of Progressive and Left-Wing Forces (Communist Party of the Interior			
plus four other small parties)	139,762	2.72	2
Communist Party of Greece	480,188	9.36	11
Umted Left (EA)1	(464,331)	(9.45)	(8)
Others ⁴	45,487	0-89	_
	(53,345)	(°98)	_
TOTAL	5,129,884	100	300
	(4,912,356)	(1∞)	(ؤ∞)

¹Communist Party of Greece (Moscow-orientated), Communist Party of the Interior (Eurocommunist), and United Democratic Left (EDA).

⁸Independents and various left-wing groups (Maossu, Trouskylsts).

parties. The Communist Party of the Interior—CP(I)—has affirmed its independence from Moscow and adopted a Eurocommunist line, while the Communist Party of Greece (exterior)—CPG—remains faithful to Moscow. In the 1974 elections the two parties nevertheless collaborated, together with EDA, under the banner of the United Left. But in 1977 the CP(I) and EDA, together with three other small centre-left parties, established the Alliance of Progressive and Left-wing Forces, in an attempt to draw votes both from within and from outside the camp of the traditional Left.

If one looks first at the overall vote given to the CPG plus the Alliance (about 12 per cent), it becomes obvious that in terms of the record prior to the 1967 dictatorship the communist performance has not been very impressive. It is true that in the first post-dictatorship elections of 1974, the United Left only won 9.45 per cent of the vote; but this was under

⁸ EDA—the United Democratic Left—was the party which held the fort for the communist forces in Greece during the long years when the Communist Party was outlawed. It remained in existence after the Communist Party was legalized again in 1974, but in terms of popular support it is now practically defunct.

⁸ Namely, Socialist March (a group of intellectuals who had been expelled from PASON); Socialist Initiative (a small group of 'progressive' bourgeous politicians who had previously been members of Mavros's liberal party); and Christian Democracy (an insignificant group of socialist-oriented Christians).

persuaded a considerable number of voters from all parties to give their support to New Democracy. Since the 'tanks' bogey had lost its force by 1977, the mere 2.5 per cent increase in the overall communist vote means that—under 'normal' circumstances this time—the pre-dictatorship level of electoral support has not been reached (in 1963, for example, the communists won 14.5 per cent of the total vote). In other words, despite the general radicalization resulting from the seven years of dictatorial rule, a certain proportion of pre-dictatorship support for the traditional Left has switched to PASOK and other parties. (In fact, however, the really significant drop in the communist vote took place before the dictatorship, between 1958—when the communist-dominated front EDA got 25 per cent—and the 1961 elections, when it only got 14.65 per cent. Although this collapse of the traditional left-wing vote could partly be attributed to the fact that the Right, terrified by the 1958 electoral results, had mobilized the State and para-State apparatus against left-wing supporters, there is no doubt that the main factor was the unification and rise of the Centre under George Papandreou.)

At all events, the major shift affecting the shrinking communist electoral redoubt on this occasion came neither from new recruits nor from any further exodus, but rather occurred internally. It took the form of a dramatic defeat for the Communist Party of the Interior. The figures show very clearly that not only did its Alliance fail to attract voters from outside the sphere of the traditional Left, it also lost communists who had voted for it in 1974 to the CPG. This becomes evident from a look at electoral areas where the CP(I) did relatively well in 1974 (for although in 1974 the CPG received more votes on the national level than the CP(1) plus EDA, in some areas the latter contributed a majority of the votes given to the communist electoral alliance). For instance, in the province of Kavala the overall communist vote did not change much from 1974 to 1977. remaining around 11 per cent. In the 1974 elections, the CP(I) plus EDA received more than half of these votes; in 1977, the situation was reversed with the CPG taking two thirds. Or to take a dramatic local example, in the left-wing village of Mesotopos on Lesbos island the overall communist vote was 434 in 1974 and 437 in 1977; of these, the CPG share was 128 in 1974, but 434 in 1977.5

PASOK and the Centre

If we move from the communist Left to the arena occupied by PASOK and

Karas, op. cit., p. 15.

⁴ This alight decline was primarily localized in the northern provinces of Greece, in the Peloponnese, the Left managed to hold on to its pre-dictatorship support. For instance, if the first electoral district of Salonica, the communist Left received 17:49 per cent of the vota (just 1:5 per cent more than in 1974), whereas in 1964 it had had 25 per cent; and in the province of Kilkia, where its pre-dictatorship strength had amounted to 19 per cent, in the 1977 elections it received only 11:87 per cent (an increase of 1:41 per cent over the 197 figure) (Elias Karia, "The election results and the Greek Left, in Asit, 3 December 197 p. 12 [in Greek].) A possible explanation for this is the much stronger migratory movement in Macedonia and Thrace. If it is accepted that migrants tend to be the more dynam members of a community, then as Elias Nicolacopoulos has argued the massive exodus from the 1960s onwards may have resulted in a loss of left-wing cadres and a weakening of local left-wing organizations.

the former and the concomitant decline of the latter. Particularly in the regions of Mainland Greece, Epirus and Thrace, PASOK more than doubled its 1974 vote. In terms of percentage of the total ballot, PASOK received 26-6 per cent in Mainland Greece and Euboea (as against 13-9 per cent in 1974); 27.8 per cent (an increase of 15) in Epirus; and 20.35 per cent (an increase of 10.86) in Thrace. So that, whereas in 1974 the PASOK votes were very unevenly distributed (e.g. in Crete it had 23.8 per cent of the vote, and in Thrace only 9.49 per cent), in 1977 its largest gains came from areas where it had made a poor showing in 1974, and the geographical distribution of PASOK supporters has become much more balanced. For instance, in terms of broad regions, pasok everywhere received more than 20 per cent of the total vote (even in terms of electoral constituencies, only eight out of fifty-six failed to reach this figure). This clearly indicates that PASOK supporters came from both rural and urban areas. In the Athens first electoral district, PASOK received 22:58 per cent of the vote (a percentage increase of 10.9); in the second electoral district 27.51 per cent (an increase of 14.34). In the Piracus first electoral district it received 23.79 per cent (an increase of 10.89), and 26.48 per cent in the second. In Salonica, again with two electoral districts, PASOK took 22-12 per cent (an increase of 11.20) in the first, and 27.55 per cent (an increase of 16.62) in the second. Given that left-wing trade unions are under communist control, PASOK urban votes come predominantly from the petty bourgeoisie (small shopkeepers, artisanal simple commodity producers) and white-collar workers. As for the rural areas, Karditsa gave pason 26.57 per cent (a percentage increase of 13.51), Corinthia 29.86 per cent (an increase of 11.90), Achaia 37.23 per cent (an increase of 12.42). The pattern was repeated on the islands: Cephalonia 24.05 per cent (an increase of 16.30); the Dodecanese 27.66 per cent (an increase of 6.65); Corfu 32.07 per cent (an increase of 9.58).

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What share of PASOR's electoral gains came from EDHK and how much from New Democracy? It is not really possible to give a precise answer to this question. What is quite certain is that the pattern of the shift was very variable across the country. In a small number of constituencies, EDHK managed to maintain or even slightly increase its 1974 level of support; in such cases, most of the new votes for PASOK probably came from New Democracy (although there may, of course, have been a 'sliding vote' from the ND to EDHK, with a concomitant number of EDHK supporters switching to PASOK). For instance, in the province of Arta, EDHK received 12.60 per cent of the vote (2 slight percentage increase of 0.74 over 1974); ND got 39.32 per cent (a percentage drop of 25.38), and PASOK 27.91 per cent (up by 12.53). Here it is evident that former supporters of Karamanlis voted massively for Papandreou. A similarly clear ND to PASOR shift occurred in provinces such as Thesprotia, Florina and Xanthi. Other provinces (Iraklion, Lasithi, Rethimno, Hania, Lesbos) show a definite EDHK to PASOK pattern. Thus in Hania, a traditionally liberal voting area, ND managed to keep its 1974 supporters, getting 16:01 per cent (a slight increase of 0.75), whereas EDHK's percentage dropped from approximately 37 per cent to 20 per cent. Thus the Hania increase in

M. Dretakis, 'A first analysis of the elections on a regional basis', Eleftherotypis, 21 December 1977 (in Greek).

from EDHK. At all events, the dominant feature across the country as a whole in 1977 is PASOK taking from ND and EDHK alike, since in the majority of cases there is a considerable drop in the electoral support of both the latter parties (e.g. in Zakinthos, Elia, Ioannina, Corfu, Preveza, etc.).

The Right

Moving, finally, from the centre to the right of the political spectrum, the major feature here is that Karamanlis's majority party ND suffered a 12·52 per cent drop in overall support (from 54·37 per cent in 1974 to 41·85 in 1977), which means that it lost 23 per cent of the votes it received three years ago. Its heaviest losses were in Arta (down 25 per cent), Thesprotia (down 27·56 per cent), and Grevena (down 26·87 per cent). In terms of broader regions, the party's vote dropped most in the traditionally conservative Peloponnese (down 17 per cent since 1974), and in Thessaly (down 14·69 per cent); it fell least in Crete (down only 1·29 per cent) and the Aegean islands (down 4·56 per cent).

It is significant that it was not only pasok which profited from ND's losses, but the far Right as well. According to a recent estimate, the newly-formed National Front (EP), whose percentage of the total vote nationally amounted to 6.82 per cent last November, managed in most regions to get between 40 and 50 per cent of ND's lost vote. The 6.82 per cent won by EP compares to 1.1 per cent won in 1974 by its now defunct predecessor the National Democratic Union (EDE). The far Right was particularly successful in drawing votes from Karamanlis's party in Thrace, Thessaly, the Aegean islands and the Peloponnese.

Of course, not all those to the right of Karamanlis voted for the monarchist, pro-junta EP. Most registered their disapproval of Karamanlis's 'socialist' policies' simply by voting for the more conservative candidates within New Democracy. For instance, in the Athens first electoral district, ND deputies considered to belong to the right wing of the party maintained or increased their votes, whereas many close collaborators of Karamanlis from the centre or left wing of ND failed altogether to be re-elected.

It would appear, then, that these two different expressions of disapprova of Karamanlis (voting for the EP or voting for the right wing of ND represent two different types of conservative voters. Those who strongly disagree with Karamanlis on such ideological fundamentals as the monarchy, communism and the junta issue, changed allegiance to the EP whereas those whose disappointment derives from more pragmatic concerns (high taxation, economic policies) opted for the milder form o disapproval. 10

⁷ Ibid

³ It must be noted that its success in Thrace was mainly due to the support it won from th relatively large Muslim minorities, most of whom voted m.

[•] His introduction of a wealth tax, the quasi-nationalization of the Stratis Andreadis bankin empire after the discovery of the latter's illegal financial manipulations, etc.

¹⁹ I think it is an indication of this that the pro-junta Papadakis (the only ND deputy who ha attended the funeral of the notorious juntist torturer Malios) lost votes in contrast to hi

underestimate the fact that it still commands the overall majority of parliamentary seats. Together with the National Front, it secured 48.67 per cent of the total vote—a right-wing overall performance paralleled hardly anywhere else in Europe.

Behind the Voting Figures

It is obvious from the above rough analysis of the 1977 election results that, despite the continuing right-wing dominance in Greek politics, the major new phenomenon requiring explanation is the structure and performance of PASOK. Although PASOK claims to be socialist and likes to compare itself with other European socialist parties, I shall argue that in terms of ideology, organization and membership it bears a much greater resemblance to Latin-American populist parties, especially those which emerged during the import-substitution phase of industrialization in the nineteen-thirties and forties. Of course, the important point is not whether PASOK is described as socialist or populist. Given the ambiguity of the terms themselves, and the fact that it is very easy to find both socialist and populist elements in PASOK's ideology, more important than the label is to identify the major structural characteristics of the movement, and to see how these are related to the overall social structure and development of modern Greece.

PASOK's Structure, Ideology and Social Base

Very briefly, in terms of organization, PASOK differs clearly from both EDHK and New Democracy in that it cannot be called a traditional clientelistic party. Both ND and EDHK, for all their protestations to the contrary and their last-minute attempts to produce modern organizational blueprints, are primarily based on extensive clientelistic networks controlled by traditional 'baron' politicians, experts in the high arts of patronage. Andreas Papandreou, dissociating himself from the tradition-orientated politicians of George Papandreou's pre-dictatorship Centre Union Party, and recruiting his main collaborators and cadres from among the young, the professionals, and the non-traditional politicians of his father's party, 19 managed to build a mass organization. with numerous local branches in all the Greek provinces and with a rank and file which far exceeds the membership of any other non-communist party. Apart from the communists, no other major party in modern Greek history has managed so decisively to break out of the clientelistic pattern or to build such an extensive organizational base. Moreover, in

other right-wing colleagues who, as already mentioned, maintained or increased their votes. In the 1974 elections, he came seventh among the ND candidates, with 18,111 votes, whereas in the recent elections he slipped to fifteenth place with 9,033 votes. (P. Loukakos, 'Which losses of the New Democracy party will influence its future policies', in To Vissa, 29 November 1977 [in Greek].) This drop in support clearly indicates that his potential supporters shifted their vote to Es

¹¹ The similarities are greater with those populist parties which had a strong organisational base, such as APRA in Peru and Acción Democratica in Venezuela.

¹⁸ Even before the dictatorship, when Andreas Papandreou was in his father's Centre Union Party, he managed to draw the less established, 'new men' of the party around him. Many of these have since joined Pasok and are his close collaborators. See Karas, 'A first acquaintance with Pasok', in Asti, 31 December 1977.

the ranks of PASOK's parliamentary team (out of 93 PASOK deputies, have been elected for the first time¹³) was a transformation paralleled on in the 1910 elections, when Venizelos's party managed to break t monopoly of the nineteenth-century political oligarchy.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that PASOR's impressive ms organization has from the start been the passive creature of its leader. one looks beyond the voluminous ideological pronouncements i participative and grass-roots democracy and goes to the heart of t matter—i.e. the way internal opposition is dealt with—it is obvious th arguments and disagreements are not tolerated; or, to be more precis they are tolerated and grass-roots democracy allowed to flourish only so far as they do not clash with the views and policies of Papandre himself. The high-handed, massive and consecutive expulsions from t party of all those who have disagreed with Papandreou leave no doubt to the authoritarian/paternalistic structure of PASOK's internal politic Since the majority of Papandreou's collaborators have no autonomo clientelistic base (as many of Mayros's or Karamanlis's collaborators de their political survival depends utterly on the personal grace of the leade On the other hand, since PASOK is effectively synonymous wi Papandreou, their leader certainly depends much less on them.

So far as ideology goes, PASOK'S policies and pronouncements, despite or in addition to—its socialist rhetoric, propound the standard themes all left-populist platforms: 1. a manichean dichotomy between the 'goo people and the 'bad' establishment, which takes the place of any analysis of the domestic political situation in class terms; 14 2. a super-national stand (principally vis-2-vis Turkey), and a tendency to identify externenemies (the CIA, NATO, the USA) as the source of all evils and misfortur suffered by the people; 3. an anthropomorphic view of imperialism as dependence, which leads to the illusory belief that once the externenemies and their local agents are eliminated, all problems underdevelopment, etc. will solve themselves automatically.

In terms of class appeal, there is no doubt that PASOK has managed to we the support of all those who, though affected by the development industrial capitalism, are outside the centres of concentrated capital production proper: 15 agricultural and artisanal simple-commoding producers, small shopkeepers, lower-echelon State employees, oth white-collar workers, etc.—i.e. the social arena par excellence for t development of populism.

¹⁸ Karas, 'The Election Results and the Greek Left', op cit., p. 14.

¹⁴ On this point, see Papaspiliopoulos, "The political forces in the next elections", An November 1977 (in Greek), also A. Elephantis and M. Kavouriaris, "PASOK. populism socialism", Politis, October 1977 (in Greek)

¹⁸ Capitalism here and in the rest of this article is defined primarily in its narrow sen referring to a mode of production characterized by relatively extensive use of wage labs and the divorce of the direct producers from their means of production. From this point view, the integration of an economy into the world capitalist market, or incommercialization of some of its sectors, do not automatically make this economy capital. See Maurice Dobb, Studies in the development of capitalism, New York 1968, pp. 1–32.

Granted the obvious populist elements in Papandreou's party, it remains to be explained why such a movement should have appeared in the first place, and why it should have been so successful at this particular moment in Greek history. Although populism is not a phenomenon strictly limited to underdeveloped capitalist social formations, it is more common in such settings, and is undoubtedly linked to the disruptions produced by unbalanced and dependent economic growth as part of an exploitative international division of labour.¹⁶

At the risk of overgeneralization, it can be said that political organizations and conflicts tend to acquire a more pronounced class character in social formations where the economy is dominated extensively by the capitalist mode of production. Where capital has ceased to operate exclusively in the sphere of distribution and has made a large-scale entry into that of production (agricultural and/or industrial), one finds: 1. a widespread process of social and political mobilization, as the rural periphery loses its self-contained character (through the development of national markets, communication networks, education, etc.) and the working population is inescapably drawn into the political process; 2. the emergence, within the context of parliamentary régimes, of favourable conditions for the development of formal organizations (political parties, trade unions), which try more or less successfully and autonomously to articulate and promote the collective interests of the dominated classes, i.e. of the urban and rural direct producers. Even if such a relative political autonomy (as for instance that of the English workers) by no means implies the total unification of the working class and its capacity or will to overthrow capitalism, it does mean that 'vertical'/clientelistic and personal/paternalistic forms of integration tend gradually but irreversibly to be replaced by 'horizontal'/class ones.

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On the other hand, in social formations where large-scale capitalist production is not yet dominant, or where its dominance takes an 'enclave' form (as in the case of Greece), conditions are less favourable for a shift from paternalistic or clientelistic to class politics. The easily 'organizable' classes constitute a small minority. For even when capital is dominant, its 'enclave' character means that the rural and urban proletariat is not large. In fact, whether as simple-commodity producers in the technologically backward artisanal or agricultural sectors, or as petty merchants or parasitic intermediaries in the over-inflated service sectors, the dominated classes in most under-developed countries find themselves in work conditions which hinder the development of horizontally and autonomously organized pressure groups. To Given this situation, and the fact that peripheral capitalism creates huge inequalities which tend to radicalize and mobilize the working population politically, how are these

¹⁸ See, for instance, A. Stewart, 'Populism: the social roots' in E. Geliner and G. l'onescu (eds), Papulism, London 1969; and J. B. Allcock, 'Populism: a brief biography', in Society, September 1971.

¹⁷ For an extended discussion of the relation between the development of class structure and clientelism, see my 'Class and clientelistic politics: the case of Greece', Secological Review (forthcoming).

One mode of 'non-class' integration can be provided, of course, by clientelistic parties of the dominant class modifying their traditional structures and adopting less oligarchic forms of organization—without, however, losing their basic patronage orientation. 18 But even in their more modern form, clientelistic modes of integration, without declining decisively as they have done in the West, are becoming increasingly fragile and precarious, especially in social formations which have undergone dependent capitalist industrialization. An alternative, and often antagonistic, mode of 'non-class' integration is populism: i.e. the mobilization of the masses by charismatic leaders, who break through the fragile clientelistic controls by building mass organizations controlled paternalistically from above. However, despite the obvious differences between clientelistic and populist modes of political integration, both contrast sharply with the relatively more autonomous, less personalized 'class' mode of integration which characterizes the political organization of the West European working classes.

An uneasy co-existence of clientelism and populistic forms of organization has been one of the most common features in the politics of those capitalist underdeveloped social formations which seek to industrialize while intermittently retaining liberal, parliamentary forms of government. Of course, whenever this mixture of clientelistic and populist modes of integration fails to guarantee the 'orderly' functioning of the existing political system, i.e. whenever the mobilized masses threaten the bourgeois order, the dominant classes attempt to demobilize them by means of dictatorial controls and to shut them out once more from active politics. The alternation between dictatorial modes of political exclusion and clientelistic/populist modes of political inclusion of the masses is, for instance, a familiar feature in many Latin American countries.

The Greek Case

These very sketchy theoretical considerations should throw at least som light on Greek political developments. Despite its very impressive rate of growth during the nineteen-sixties and seventies, Greece's model o capital accumulation very much resembles that of those Latin America countries which contemporaneously experienced a foreign-capital-le type of industrialization. In this respect, the following points should b noted.

1. Greece in the sixties, due mainly to foreign capital (orienting itself i such key sectors of the economy as metallurgy and chemicals experienced considerable industrial growth. This was evidenced not onl by the very rapid expansion of the manufacturing sector, but also by

¹⁸ See, for instance, J. D. Powell, 'Peasant society and clientelistic politics', America Political Science Review, 1970, vol. 64. For a more specific account of long-ten transformation of clientelistic politics in the Mediterranean area, see the articles of M. Attalides, S. Khalaf and K. Brown in E. Gellner and J. Waterburg (eds.), Patrons on clients in Mediterranean secretary, London 1977.

goods and durables and by a marked increase in industrial exports.16

- 2. However, as in many other countries on the capitalist periphery, this 'late', foreign-capital-led industrialization interacted with the rest of the economy in such a way as to create serious disruptions and bottlenecks. In both industry and agriculture, small-commodity production prevails in significant sectors, whose links with the 'modern' industrial sector are clearly negative. Thus one of the most striking characteristics of Greek industry is the persistence of small, low-productivity units, side by side with large capitalist firms which dominate the market. These small units remain on the whole unspecialized, highly inefficient and permanently on the borderline between bare survival and bankruptcy. In agriculture, simple-commodity production is even more prevalent, with the small agricultural producer working—usually with family labour—not for profit but for mere survival.
- 3. In other words, the links between the industrial capitalist sector and the simple-commodity sectors (small industry and agriculture) are such that the latter, without being actually destroyed, are nevertheless kept permanently in a depressed and vegetative state, while by a variety of mechanisms their resources are systematically transferred to the technologically advanced, monopolistically controlled sectors and abroad.

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The massive rural exodus from Greece during the post-war period did not greatly change this situation. In the countryside, large-scale depopulation did not lead to a decrease of land fragmentation or the development of enterprises employing wage-labour. In the urban centres, the capital-intensive type of industrialization meant that those coming from the countryside could not be employed in the capitalist-industrial sector. Those who did not go to work abroad swelled the ranks of civil servants, innumerable parasitic intermediaries in the service sectors, and the plethora of small-commodity producers in small industry.

Given this state of affairs, it is not surprising that inequality is much greater in Greece than in western Europe. In addition to the usual inequalities between labour and capital in the capitalist sectors, there are inequalities resulting from the persistence of big productivity differentials between the technologically advanced and the backward

¹⁹ Whereas in 1948-30 light industry accounted for 77.5 per cent of total manufacturing output, its share went down to 60.9 per cent in 1963-70. Again, in 1960 agricultural products constituted 80 per cent of the country's exports, by 1966 the figure was down to 54 per cent, and in 1971 it stood at 42 per cent.

³⁰ É. Kartakia, La développement industriel de la Grèce, Lausanne 1970, pp. 20 ff. For an analysis of small and large industry in Greece in terms of modes of production, see M. Serafetinidi, The breakdown of parhamentary institutions in Greece (Ph.D. thesis), London School of Economics 1977.

²¹ C Vergopoulos, La capitalisme differme et la neuvelle question agraire—L'exemple de la Grèce moderne, Paris 1977.

²³ A competent estimate makes 40 per cent of the population in the lowest income groups receive 9.5 per cent of the national income (after deduction of taxes and social benefits), whereas the 17 per cent in the top income brackets receive 58 per cent. See D. Karageorgas, 'The distribution of the tax burden by income groups in Greece', Essential, June 1973.

----روسالعالات وسيستمت م latter are undergoing a process of intense relative deprivation, as big capital returns enjoy a spectacular growth at the expense of almost all other incomes. In 1951, per capita income for the agricultural sector was more than 80 per cent of the average national figure; by 1971 it was barely over half.23 A similar pattern of growing inequality is discernable in the urban centres, not only between capital and labour, but especially within the middle classes. Certain professional and white-collar categories have seen their incomes rise rapidly, whereas the bulk of the white-collar population, the urban simple-commodity producers and the old petty bourgeoisie, lacking effective trade-union organization, have suffered a dangerous shrinkage of their incomes through galloping inflation. Of course, the period following the international oil crisis, which was characterized by a drastic drop in investment and high rates of inflation, has further accentuated all these trends.

These developments have not, of course, brought pauperization in absolute terms. Given the high rates of growth during most of the postwar period, large-scale emigration, and revenue from tourism and emigrants' remittances, per capita income has been rising steadily, with some small part of this growth trickling down even to the poorest classes. But though the standard of living has not actually dropped, the spread of the mass media and the loosening of traditional ties and outlooks has exacerbated feelings of relative deprivation. The fact that the television set is increasingly replacing the radio as a standard fixture in village cafes and households not only accelerates the spread of western consumption patterns and needs, it also makes social inequalities more visible. The growing consumptionist mentality, plus the awareness that consumer goods are very unequally distributed, is the most effective catalyst for the dissolution of traditional clientelistic networks and the emergence of s large floating vote. A growing mass of people, freed from traditiona attachments, is available for mobilization by whoever finds the organizational and ideological means to win their confidence.

The Appeal of PASOK

Given the general picture delineated above, PASOK's success, particularly among the rural population and the urban petty bourgeoisie, become more comprehensible. Within the context of the increasingly fragily clientelistic networks in both the urban centres and in the countryside Papendreou's charisma, highly disciplined mass organization and populist/socialist ideology met with very wide response. Two majo elements in his pre-electoral programme and speeches were particularly effective. First, his ultra-nationalist stance—manifested notably in his total intransigence vis-à-vis Turkey (refusal of any discussion on the Aegean problem); his virulent hostility towards the Americans; and his anti-NATO and anti-EEC policies (total withdrawal from the former advocacy of a mere 'Norwegian' type of connection with the latter Secondly, his socio-economic platform, which included nationalizatio of basic industry and the main import/export trade; support for small an

¹² N Vernicos, Grace facing the eightest (in Greek), Athens 1975, p. 116.

capital; the creation of co-operatives in the countryside to organize the production, distribution and industrial processing of agricultural produce; and a number of more immediate rewards to the underprivileged, such as big pension increases, better agricultural prices, advanced welfare services and so on. Naturally, all of this should be taken with the scepticism that pre-electoral promises by their nature merit.

These two basic orientations contrast sharply with the major policies of New Democracy, which have as a target to bring Greece as quickly as possible into the EEC; to remove any remaining obstacles (such as the conflict with Turkey) which keep Greece outside NATO; and to create favourable conditions for the attraction of foreign capital and the increase of private investment. Given these fundamental differences in policy orientation, it is not difficult to see why PASOR's main themes of 'Greece to the Greeks' and 'social justice' should have appealed to the disadvantaged and radicalized rural and urban population much more than Karamanlis's dull rhetoric about 'private enterprise', or his 'Greece belongs to the West' theme. In fact, Papandreou's basic messages, always delivered in a very direct and emotive manner, could hardly fail to attract voters situated both to the left and to the right of PASOK. His skilful manipulation of nationalist themes, which made him appear a superpatriot, was particularly important as far as the urban petty bourgeois strata and the rural population were concerned. For these have been conditioned by years of right-wing propaganda normally to associate egalitarian policies with the lack of patriotism and servility to Moscow. As a super-patriot, however, Papandreou could talk about social justice, socialism, and even Marxism without being automatically labelled a communist—an epithet to which, even three decades after the civil war, a strong stigma is still attached. As a Peloponnesean villager put it to a journalist investigating the reasons for the decline of right-wing strongholds in the countryside, For the first time we could vote for real change without being considered second-class citizens.'

A comparison between PASOK's electoral strategy and that of EDHK or the Alliance makes clear the fundamental reasons for the twin failures of the latter. So far as the Alliance—or rather its major partner the CP(1)—is concerned, the decision to retain the communist label made it effectively a foregone conclusion that the party would be unable to reach out beyond the communist camp to conquer the 'centre-left' vote. Such is the continuing strength of anti-communism in Greece. Neither its active anti-Sovietism, nor its eagerness to collaborate with bourgeois parties, nor its pro-eec policies could persuade the non-communist Greek elector to give his vote to a party calling itself communist. On the other hand, if the 'moderate' policies enumerated above failed to persuade the floating voters on the party's right, they were equally incapable of attracting those on its left. Many of those who still vote communist do so less as the result of a rational Marxist analysis of the present situation, than from unwillingness to desert a persecuted group and out of traditional loyalty to all those communist militants who sacrificed their lives in the civil war. In these circumstances, the CP(1)'s eleventh-hour alliance with EDA and three other electorally insignificant centre-left groups, and its decision to focus the electoral campaign on the theme of unity of all democrats

opportunity to portray its rival as a bourgeois, social-democratic party, which had forsaken all Marxist-Leninist principles. With the cp(i) thus falling disastrously between two stools, it is not surprising that the pro-Moscow party, with its greater economic resources and its much more disciplined and autocratic organization, managed to bring back to its fold the overwhelming majority of communists who had either joined the Eurocommunist party or been flirting with the idea of doing so.

The EDHK, heir to the great Venizelist liberal party, for its part declinedprobably irreversibly—for the basic reason that the monarchy has finally ceased to be a pivotal issue in Greek politics. Ever since the civil war, Greece has progressed towards mass politics, and the intra-bourgeois conflict over the throne which dominated inter-war politics has gradually had to yield pride of place to the issue of 'how to contain the masses'. One of the specific characteristics of the 1977 elections was to make it, for the first time, crystal clear that the throne issue has finally ceased to be the dominant issue in Greek politics. In the face of this fundamental change in the nature of the political cleavage, EDHK found itself without an ideology that would differentiate it from the 'progressive wing' of Karamanlis's New Democracy. Its half-hearted attempts to adopt socialist slogans and to transform itself into a modern, non-personalistic party were totally incongruent with the old-fashioned, clientelistically orientated politicians who hold sway within it. Its leader Mavros, lacking the charisma of either Papandreou or Karamanlis and trying to present a more restrained, western style of leadership, salled to arouse any enthusiasm in his supporters, and thus to some extent accelerated EDHK's unavoidable decline. Just as the more decentralized and looser organizational structure of the CP(I) was far less effective than the bureaucratic authoritarianism of the CPG, so the timid 'western'-style leadership exercised by Mavros was no match for Papandreou's charismatic/paternalistic authoritarianism.

Delayed Populism

It should now be clear why it was PASOK rather than EDHK or the Alliance which managed to capture the large floating vote of the radicalized rural and urban strata. Given the type of capitalist industrialization which Greece is undergoing, it is perhaps not at all surprising that it should have been a left-wing populist party that finally destroyed the liberal-versus conservative cleavage which had prevailed in Greek politics for so long. What is indeed surprising, and problematic, is why such a populist movement did not appear at an earlier phase of Greece's industrialization. In fact, if one looks as similar movements in Latin America and the Balkans, they have tended to appear at a much earlier stage of capitalist industrialization—more specifically during the transition period of a social formation from pre capitalism to the dominance of the capitalist mode of production.

²⁴ On the long-term changes in the power position of the throne in relation to the development of the class structure, see Mouzelis, *Greece*. Facets of under development, Londor 1978, chapter 6.

M Although RDHK is by no means a democratically run party, its internal command structure is less authoritarian than that of New Democracy or PASOK (on this point, see P. Bakoyiannis, Ameteury of Greek politics [in Greek], Athens 1977, pp. 150 ff).

peripheral as a mode of production, and the bulk of the working population remained outside the sphere of active politics—which with some exceptions was the business of a handful of oligarchic families. It was the unprecedentedly massive export of European capital in the eighteen-eighties which, both in the Balkans and in many Latin American countries, initiated a very slow process of dependent industrialization (a process accentuated in Latin America by the subsequent massive intrusion of North American capital). The rise of the 'middle classes', and their attempt to break the monopoly of political power exercised by traditional oligarchic groups, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in both Latin America and the Balkans, must definitely be considered as part of this early phase of industrialization. However, whereas in such parts of Latin America as Bolivia, Peru, Chile and Brazil, fractions of the middle classes fighting against the oligarchy often mobilized in populistic fashion an urban and rural population which, even in the inter-war period, was already suffering from the disruptions of capitalist underdevelopment, so inter-war Greece knew nothing of populism on any large scale. 27 Despite similar processes of capitalist underdevelopment, Greece never had a Vargas, a Peron or, to move to the Balkan context, a populist leader like Bulgaria's Stamboliiski. What is the explanation for this absence of a serious populist movement in interwar Greece?

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Only a very tentative answer can be suggested here to this difficult and highly complex question. Very briefly, a major reason has to do with the famous dichasmos, the profound political split over the issue of the monarchy which, more than anything else, shaped the basic structure of Greek inter-war politics. Thus at a time when in most Latin American countries the oligarchic ancien régime (characterized mainly by the conflict between conservative and liberal parties over clericalism, extension of suffrage, etc.) was shattered by the emergence of strong mass parties putting forward an anti-imperialist, anti-establishment platform, Greece was still fixed in a quasi-legalistic conflict over the future of the throne. Or to come closer home, at a time when all other Balkan countries had serious agrarian/populist movements and parties which, more or less successfully, were trying to promote peasant interests, the controversy over the throne drew Greek peasants into a type of conflict which had very little relevance to their own problems. At the time when Stamboliiski's Agrarian Union was taking power in Bulgaria and attempting to implement an anti-oligarchic, populist programme of social reform, the Greek Agrarian Party was an insignificant entity, and

⁵⁶ See especially J. Malloy, 'Authoritarianum and corporatium in Latin America: the modal pattern', in J. Malloy (ed.), Authoritarianum and Corporatium in Latin America, Pittsburgh 1977

⁸⁷ I emphasise 'large-scale', because there have always been certain populistic elements in some of the Greek political parties (e.g. in Tsaldaris's Populist Party, Papagos's Greek Rally, and Plasticas's EPEK). However, they were never so strong as to give an overall populist character to these parties.

This was particularly true before these parties came to exercise governmental power. After their ascent to power, they tended to become much more conservative; for instance, APRA in Peru, or MNR in Bolivia. See Jean-Pierre Bernard et. al., Guide to the Political Parties of South America, Aylesbury 1973.

networks of the two major bourgeois parties.*

Thus it is only now, after a bloody civil war and a long period in which the victorious Right kept the exploited classes under tight clientelistic and/or dictatorial controls, that the throne issue has finally lost its centrality and ceased to operate as the major mechanism of political disorientation. And it is only now that an Andreas Papandreou, latter-day. Stamboliiski of the Greek rural and urban underprivileged, has added a socialist/populist dimension to the politics of modern Greece.

There has been a long and heated debate in Greece as to whether PASOK IS a socialist or a populist party. Notwithstanding the pronouncements of its leadership and supporters, the movement has repeatedly been criticized for not being a genuinely socialist party of the western European type. This is, of course, true, but with the kind of capitalist underdevelopment Greece has undergone since the nineteenth century, and given its Ottoman heritage, it is hardly surprising. How could a radical movement emerging out of disruptions created by 'late' peripheral capitalism resemble the western European labour and socialist parties, with their totally different origins and dynamics? At a time when western Europe was experiencing the socio-political transformations which eventually led to the industrial and French revolutions, Greece was an impoverished province of a decaying patrimonial empire. Having finally cast off the Ottoman yoke, Greece came to share the fate of its Balkan neighbours, savagely oppressed by the political, economic and cultural imperialism of capitalist West Europe.

This must not be interpreted as an attempt to justify the ambiguous character of PASOK. Nor does it imply that there is a one-to-one mechanical relationship between economic and political structures and that, therefore, Greece's underdeveloped conditions makes PASOK the only type of new mass movement that could emerge on the left of the Greek political spectrum. What does, however, need to be stressed is that, in assessing PASOR's structure, performance and potential future evolution, it is necessary to get away from the neo-evolutionist fallacy which sets up West European political structures as the relevant standard of comparison and the obligatory final goal. For Greece is following a trajectory very different from that of either western or the remainder of southern Europe. This specific trajectory may exclude any classical socialdemocratic perspective, and permit other political scenarios. This means that the specific dynamic of PASOK, the way in which its existing contradictions are resolved, will be of crucial importance at this turningpoint in Greek history.

²⁰ Of course, there are many other reasons for the non-existence of agrarian populism is inter-war Greece: for instance, the sarly development of the disspora bourgeoisie, and the considerable role it played in shaping the major institutions of modern Greece. For a mor systematic treatment of the reasons behind the differences in political organization of the Greek and Bulgarian inter-war peasantry, see my 'Greek and Bulgarian peasants: aspects of their socio-political organization during the inter-war period', in Comparative Studies is Society and History, January 1975.

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Rudolf Bahro has been a communist since he joined the East German Socialist Unity Party (SED) at the age of seventeen in 1952. He is the author of the book 'The Alternative. A Critique of Socialism as it actually Exists'. Following its publication by the Europhische Verlagsanstalt, a company owned by the West German trade union federation DGB, Bahro was arrested last August on a charge of 'espionage' and is now threatened with a long prison sentence.

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For further information contact: The Bahro Defence Committee, c/o Gilnter Minnerup, School of Languages and Area Studies, Portsmouth Polytechnic, Hampshire Terrace, Portsmouth, Hants.

Marxism in Literary Criticism

erry Eagleton's Criticism and Ideology is a work of major importance. Its range icludes the conventionally separate fields of poetics (the specificity of literary iscourse and the character and conditions of literary value); 'literary criticism' he analysis and judgment of particular works); literary history; and the sciology of literature, 'institutional' and 'genetic'. Its objective is to assist in the ipersession of these particularisms and the re-composition of their problemeas into a conceptually unified domain under the command of historical aterialism. The book is also remarkable for its emphatic attention to its own tuation: its first chapter, which includes reflections on the nature of bourgeois iticism, an incisive account of the particular history of literary studies in ingland—Scrutiny and its aftermath—and a long critique of Britain's foremost cialist theoretician of culture, Raymond Williams, is in fact Eagleton's analysis his own formation as a critic and a map of the conjuncture in which he now eks to intervene. So marked a combination of ambition and 'self-awareness' is re in Marxist literary theory. Criticism and Ideology is also and very evidently a

occupy in a lengthening sequence of books, but also, as Eagleton himself observes, because of the modifications and developments of argument that occur within it, in a compositional series whose order is not that of the published volume. It could hardly be otherwise: the range of topical dealt with is very wide; the problems raised are among the most intractable in the entire history of Marxist reflection on culture; and it is still unclear, despite the simple presumption of some and the peremptory denials of others, whether the 'ancillary' theoretical discourses called upon psychoanalysis and semiotics are in any full or rigorous sense compatible with historical materialism. Eagleton's insistence on the provisionality of his book must, then, be taken seriously; to overlook it is to ask of his arguments what they do not claim to offer and to waste the many opportunities that they do provide. The remarks that follow are made on this understanding; what they represent is not a critique—as of a consolidated intellectual position, in the name of a stable alternative—o even a comprehensive review of the standard kind, but a series of notes neither complete nor conclusive, written in counterpoint to some ke themes invoked in or arising from the book.

England and Europe

Criticism and Ideology is the first major study in Marxist literary theory to be written in England in forty years—that is an important part of it distinction. It is also, Eagleton would add, the cause of it embarrassment. 'Any English Marxist who tries now to construct i materialist aesthetics must be painfully conscious of his inadequacies. For, as he explains, 'It is not only that so many issues in this field ar fraught and inconclusive, but that to intervene from England is almos automatically to disenfranchise oneself from debate. It is to feel acutel bereft of a tradition, as a tolerated house-guest of Europe, a precociou but parasitic alien.' It is appropriate that Eagleton's preface should ope with this statement, for the distinction so vividly registered there between England and continental Europe, forms the major premiss of hi analysis of socialist culture in modern Britain, and in particular of the work of Raymond Williams."

The political and cultural ramifications of that distinction are thoroughl familiar now, after more than a decade of steadily widening acceptanc among British Marxists. And its salutary effects are obvious: there now exists an identifiable Marxist current in British culture, still small an vulnerable, but nonetheless versatile and productive, and perhaps more internationalist in cultural outlook than its longer-establishe counterparts in France, Germany and Italy, from which it has learned a much. But it needs to be asked whether the foundations of the distinction were entirely sound, and whether, in the changed politico-culture conditions of the late Seventies, its weaknesses may not now be of great importance than its strengths. An issue so large and comple

¹ NT B 1076.

² Eagleton's critique of Williams cannot be discussed in detail here, but see Antho Barnett, 'Raymond Williams and Marxism: a Rejoinder to Terry Eagleton', NLR (September-October 1976), pp. 47-64.

discussed in the present context. One concrete indication of its contours, taken from Criticism and Ideology, will have to suffice for the present.

Returning to the 'dilemma' of the materialist aesthetician in England, Eagleton evokes the memory of his 'major forebear', Christopher Caudwell, in these terms: 'insulated from much of Europe, intellectually isolated even within his own society, permeated by Stalinism and idealism, bereft of a "theory of superstructures", Caudwell nevertheless persevered in the historically hopeless task of producing from these unpropitious conditions a fully-fledged Marxist aesthetic. His work bears all the scars of that enterprise: speculative and erratic, studded with random insights, punctuated by hectic forays into and out of alien territories and strewn with hair-raising theoretical vulgarities. If Caudwell lacked a tradition of Marxist aesthetics, it is a measure of that absence that we, coming after him, lack one too.' (p. 21) It should be said, first of all, that this portrait, although not inaccurate, is tendentiously drawn. Caudwell was no more 'insulated from much of Europe' than any other Communist in his material circumstances who read only two European languages besides his own; and what was 'lacking' in his formation as a theorist of aesthetics was not so much a Marxist tradition (he was aware of and at least partly acquainted with the 'classical', largely pre-1914 Marxist writings in the field) as the incomparable German tradition of philosophical aesthetics. A more important consideration, however, is that this portrait of a supposedly Anglo-Marxist predicament seems recognizable from another, much wider context. Insulated from much of Europe'-by the mid-Thirties, imprisonment and exile had so disabled many Marxist intellectuals. Intellectually isolated even within his own society'—the Frankfurt School before its emigration. Permeated by Stalinism and idealism'-more so than Lukács in the first case, or Adomo in the second? 'Bereft of a "theory of superstructures" -- only in the sense that no historicist Marxism conceptualizes the superstructure in a way that Eagleton would find acceptable. In short, Caudwell's political and intellectual predicament was not so peculiarly English at all. On the contrary, if we look more closely at his work, we find that, with all due allowance made for the particular national and intellectual-biographical circumstances of its author, its basic structure—an almost total neglect of political and economic theory in favour of aesthetic, philosophical and other cultural questions, a marked dependence on a coeval national idealism (neo-utilitarian aesthetics) and on psychoanalysis, and all this in the context of marginal, almost self-effacing participation in the Communist Party—is more or less homologous with that of much Western Merxist production in his own time.3

The issue here is not simply one of intellectual equity in respect of Caudwell or of his lesser English contemporaries—I would agree that 'there is little, except negatively, to be learnt from [Caudwell]', and still less to be gained from any policy of national self-reliance. It is, rather, the politically crucial question of historical understanding. What I would argue is that the history of Marxism in modern Britain should be

³ These remarks on 'Western Marxism' refer to the arguments of Perry Anderson in Counderstons on Western Marxism, NLB 1976.

continental record, but as a variant, albeit an 'extreme' one, of a structurally singular Western European experience whose matrix is the political history of the continent; and that the England/Europe distinction, in its most common summary form, is actively inimical to any such understanding.

"The Thirties'—the phrase seems naked without inverted commas, for i is now less a chronological marker than a highly charged and highly ambivalent image. The period between the Depression and the Korean war saw virtually a whole generation of British intellectuals won and their lost to Marxism and the politics of the Left. As such, it is of centra importance, both for what it might tell us of political choices which are is many respects before us still, and for its symbolic role in the ideologics contests of today. Yet British Marxists have scarcely begun to investigat it. Some rest content with the sentimental and politically anodyn archivism of which John Lewis's The Left Book Class is a characteristi recent product; while others, embarrassed and repelled by old-guard (an often rear-guard) reminiscence and by the relative poverty of the object of its fixation, turn away to other, more commanding models & revolutionary thought and action-typically, to 'Europe'. Few no could quarrel with this evaluation, or wish it rescinded; but it has to often induced an amnesia that is entirely negative and disabling. Th historiography of Thirties culture has been dominated for more than quarter of a century now by two types of interpretation: one originatin in Scrudiny and only recently inflated to quasi-anthropological status i Martin Green's Children of the Sun; the other, blatantly and militantly ant communist, beginning with The God that Failed and now relayed b George Watson's Politics and Laterature in Modern Britain. Against thes British Marxists have little to offer except memories and disclaimers. Th intellectual and political failing has never been creditable; today, as tl Left faces a widening anti-Marxist cultural mobilization, its consequence are more than we can afford.

Freud and the Tasks of Materialist Criticism

The particular terrain in which Eagleton situates himself is, of cours that of literary criticism, and here too his first concern is to plot its mc significant contours. Literary criticism as it has traditionally beconceived and practised in modern England is essentially a maieur discipline. Its task is to assist the birth of a 'response' whose possibility certified in advance by the identical 'human' constitutions of writer as reader, needing only the practised hand of the critic to ease it in actuality. What criticism seeks to produce, if anything, is the conditio of its own disappearance. 'All criticism should confess its limitations; b bourgeois criticism rarely seems more confident than when it speaks of own redundancy.' (p. 11) Eagleton is right in this, and right too when points out that the infertility of literary criticism is an illusion. In brilliant analogy, he likens the actual work of criticism to the process tl Freud termed 'secondary elaboration' or 'secondary revision'. Just as t dream-text is continually worked and re-worked by censorsh elaborated into coherence or driven still further into unrecognizal disorder, in the interests of the norms of waking life, so bourge

discrepancies, concealing its gaps and silences, in the name of an ideal 'coherence'. This process whereby criticism becomes the sponsor of the text's 'ideal', 'the text as it would "want" to appear', is the undeclared productive activity of criticism and the source of its ideological potency.

To break with bourgeois ideology in the study of literature is thus not simply to bring a certain technique under the control of alternative values, but to displace an integrally ideological practice: 'criticism is not a passage from text to reader: its task is not to redouble the text's self-understanding, to collude with its object in a conspiracy of eloquence. Its task is to show the text as it cannot know itself, to manifest those conditions of its making (inscribed in its very letter) about which it is necessarily silent.' (p. 43) If bourgeois criticism services the cogito of the dominant culture, the materialist alternative proposed by Eagleton is to assume the position of the Freudian analyst: 'the task of both criticism and dream-analysis... is to articulate that of which the discourse speaks-without-saying-it—or, more precisely, to examine the distortion-mechanisms which produce that ruptured discourse, to reconstruct the work-process whereby the text suffers an internal displacement by virtue of its relations to its conditions of possibility.' (p. 91)

Eagleton's analogical borrowings from Freud are the source of some of his most penetrating insights into the character and functioning of bourgeois criticism; but as models for a materialist alternative they are rather more problematic than he appears to recognize. It might be said, in fact, that he has in practice repersed the analogy offered by Freud's work, diverging from what is most pertinent in it, and adopting what is least applicable to the project of a materialist criticism.

The emphasis of Eagleton's theoretical arguments falls heavily on the conditions of production of the literary text. It is not that he overlooks the productive activity of the text—he is also emphatic on this point—but that the 'natural' bias of his attention is towards the impasse that this activity must more often than not reach: not its striving for 'organic' wholeness, but its ultimate embarrassment. And the units of his concrete analyses, accordingly, are individual texts and groups of texts, in their relations with a particular social history. This is in striking contrast with Freud's mode of presentation. The Interpretation of Dreams is not, as a whole or in any of its major divisions, a series of case-studies. It is composed in accordance with the logic of a theoretical exposition; and the nodes of that logic are the concepts that explain the function and functioning of the dream. Its central concern, to which the individual dream-analyses are structurally subordinate, is with the morphology and syntax of oneiric discourse, with its means of production. What is involved here is not simply a 'formal' matter: Eagleton's option is symptometic of a diversion of attention towards the pathology of the individual text, at the expense of his central theoretical objective, 'a science of the text'.

The notion of criticism as secondary revision serves, paradoxically, to illuminate the ultimate disparity between Freudian dream-analysis and the materialist criticism of literature. A dream is an event; the material

occurrence, significant now for what it reveals of the psychic condition of the patient, and perhaps for what it can contribute to general theory, but not otherwise. A literary text, in contrast, does not simply occur; it comes into being, and may achieve and maintain cultural currency in times and places remote from those in which it was produced; its time is, so to speak, a perpetual present. And for as long and as widely as it escapes cultural oblivion, it continues to produce sense—or rather, as the analogy of secondary revision enables us to see, it continues to serve as pre-text for a multitude of discourses, of which the most obvious, today, is 'literary criticism'. It is for this reason that a materialist analysis of literature musi at the same time be an intervention in the dominant literary-critical culture—and for the same reason that the intervention envisaged by Eagleton is inadequate to its tasks. What a text 'shows' or can be made to show of its means of production is of incontestable importance. But it cannot be decisive, either theoretically or in the 'politics' of criticism Firstly, because if a text is not an 'event' but a 'function' transposable in time and space, its conditions of production can have no special priority it analysis over its subsequent and variable conditions of existence en activity. Secondly, because what the entire history of discourse of literature shows is how much, in how many different circumstances, a tex can be made to signify; what has to be confronted in bourgeois criticisn is not only the ideological import of its practices but the fact of its results an infinite variety of interpretations and judgments, all grounded more o less unimpeachably in 'the words on the page'. So then, if the notion o secondary revision betrays the weakness of the Freudian analogy, it also reinforces its point of strength. For one of the conditions of critics variety is surely the material character of literary discourse itself. Th question of how such variety is possible—and bourgeois critics are no slow to ask it—is only one form of the central question: how doe literature produce?

The Work of the Text

Criticism and Ideology is marked throughout by a tonic insistence on the productivity of the literary text. Rejecting any conception that would define the literary as expression (of an individual or class subject 'translation' (of a pre-existing ideology) or reflection (of the historic real), Eagleton emphasizes the work of the text, the process of 'labour' i which it so produces ideology as to disclose the latter's relations with it real conditions of existence. At the same time, he takes pains t distinguish his own positions from those of formalist poetics: form doe not induce the contents 'appropriate' to it, is not ideologically univales and, most important, is not to be understood as a simply technical cotherwise transcendent faculty whose productive power is derived from source 'outside' the ideology which it works. It is rather a certain capacit of ideology itself: literature is ideology 'raised to the second power'.

The mathematical metaphor in which Eagleton encapsulates his thesis indicative of its conceptual stresses. The attempt to establish and develor a concept of literary productivity distinct from that of formalism least often to formulations which, however supple and qualified, seem to resu in historicist tautologies. Thus, having criticized Althusser and Machen

sheerly ideological', he writes: 'the process of the text is the process whereby ideology produces the forms which produce it, thus determining in general both the instruments and devices which work it, and the nature of the work-process itself.' (p. 84) The anti-formalist corrective that such arguments seek to enforce is necessary, but their consequences are a neglect of 'the work-process' as an isolable object of study—it is actually suggested at one point (p. 73) that 'textual operations' are a 'metaphor for what is being textually operated'—and, in at least one passage, a radical and avowed historicism: 'history, one might say, is the ultimate signified of literature, as it is the ultimate signified.' (p. 72) Eagleton goes on to qualify this formulation, needless to say, but it remains telling as a momentary disclosure of one competing tendency in a stressful argument. In it, the ultimate 'text' is the self-sign of History—the Book of the World.

Such passages represent Eagleton's argument at its most embattled, caught in a dialectic of formalism and historicism that can be balanced but not transcended. Elsewhere, however, it does advance towards a possible solution. The condition of this advance is the return of 'form' and 'ideology' to their common home in language. For once form is recognized as a certain state—or better, formation—of language and ideology as something that is produced and exists only in material processes of signification, it becomes possible to displace the 'technicist' image of production, with its inexhaustible and theoretically bemusing power of attraction and repulsion. Here again, Eagleton refers to Freud. Comparing the literary text with the dream as 'modes of discourse', he writes: 'the problematic relation between them and their conditions of production results in both cases in an inherently ambiguous discourse, such that the terms in which Freud characterizes the dream suggest "literariness"—dream as degrammaticized language with shifting semantic emphases, operating through "loosely related compressions", blendings and condensations of its materials which may entail the suspension of elementary logical rules. It is an ambiguity appropriate to the displacement and elision of meaning, and it is therefore an equally appropriate mode for the literary text.' (p. 92) The implications of this passage are extremely fertile, but they co-exist with the more explicit counter-indications of a preceding stage of the argument in which the literary text is said to exhibit a 'dominance of signifier over signified'. (p. 79, my emphasis) The meaning of this phrase is not clear, but what seems to be implied is that the literary is defined by a certain excess ('disproportioning') of the signifier. This, if it is the case, appears to me to be incorrect, and inconsistent with the implicit point of Eagleton's comparison of the literary text and the dream. The manifest text of the dream is sparse and laconic; the effect of the dream-work is not to augment the substance of the signifier but to reduce it, as the essential condition of its efficacy. And the same is true of the literary text.

The analogy between dream-text and literary text, for all its suggestiveness, is decisively limited, not least in the circumstance that the dream is private and involuntary, while literature, in most obvious respects, is neither. There is, however, another analogy to hand, equally suggestive and more consistently pertinent, in what Freud described and

of pleasure': the joke. The main thesis of Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious, crudely summarized, is that the joke is produced in the conjunction of two factors: the unconscious (infantile) desire for linguistic pleasure, for a language heedless of fixed distinctions and of the actual contents and proportions of the real; and the formation in the preconscious of a more or less 'unspeakable' thought. The latter is 'given over for a moment to unconscious revision' and the outcome is that ambiguous and, in principle, socially acceptable text known as the joke. The function of the joke is to effect an economy of 'inhibition': the quantum of pleasure that it carries both licenses its dubious meaning—'a joke is a joke'—and diverts normal critical attention from it; censorship is momentarily relaxed, and the psychic energy thus saved is discharged in laughter.

It is not possible here to consider every aspect of even this partial summary, in its possible bearing on literary theory. What should be noted, however, is that the formal properties of the joke-text are precisely those of the manifest dream. In other words, that the ultimate outcome of the joke-work-an economy of inhibition-is itself the effect of at economy—of the substance and also, though perhaps less often, of the form of the signifier and that the text, economical in its means and ultimate effects, is, as a paradoxical result, abnormally rich in meaning The effect of contracting the signifier—the pun is the outstanding case or this—is an expansion of the signified: to be precise, that peculiar form o expansion known to psychoanalysis as the property of 'condensed images, and to literary theory as 'ambiguity' or 'polysemy'. This contraction of the form and substance of the signifier is the primary, if no the only, process of the work of the literary text; and the proliferation o meaning that it makes possible is the condition of its ideologica productivity. The process is at its most obvious in poetry. Rhyme alliteration and assonance, the play of prosodic and natural speech rhythms in the poetic line; metaphor and simile; the reversible syntax o certain of Empson's poems, the minimal punctuation of Apollinaire's, o the interplay of syntactic and stanzaic 'sentences' in certain of Eliot's; th use of allusion, local or structural (the 'cultural rhymes' of the Cantos o the classicism of Paradise Lost)—all these are instances of a process that se contracts the signifier as to liberate or at least to loosen the signifieds. Th basic process of the novel, although usually less apparent in detail, is th same. Its modalities include such well-known formal elements a 'symmetry' (The Scarlet Latter or Wuthering Heights), 'parallelism' (th 'Homeric' dimension of Uhuses'), 'submerged plot' (of which a recent cas is E. L. Doctorow's use, in Ragtime, of Kleist's novella, Michael Koblbaa: and, most typically, that form of 'condensation' noted by Eagleton in h analysis of the symbolic investment of the sexes in Lawrence's novel: These investments are, as he observes, unstable (p. 159); and this is th condition of their efficacy. The ambiguities induced by the metonymies (the novel are the sum que non of its displacements, and thus of it ideological work.

⁴ Johns and Their Relation to the Unconstitute [1905], London 1976, p. 238.

⁸ Ibid., p. 223 (italicized in the original). More precisely, this concerns the 'tendentio' joke', which Freud considered its highest and most valuable form

Romanticism, that 'literature is liberating'. Eagleton rightly insists on the variability of the text-ideology relationship, across a spectrum that ranges from conformity to revolution. What the analogy of the joke suggests, however, is that the 'tendency' of the literary text is irreducibly ambivalent. The joke-work, like the dream-work, serves both expression and repression. The joke is uncertain in its status (jokes are 'not serious') and in its signification (ambiguity works both for and against expression); it is, so to speak, 'repressive expression'. Literature is similarly uncertain in status (it is 'not true') and in signification. What the text can be shown to say, or to permit to be said, is made possible only by its characteristic way of not quite saying it. Ambiguity is there to be exploited, but it can equally be repudiated, its means consumed or disdained as ornament, its meanings rejected as nonsense or revered as mystery. Furthermore, this ambivalence does not only inhere in the cultural fate of the text; it is the perhaps unalterable effect of its peculiar mode of operation. The difference between the 'conformist' novels of Trollope (which are perhaps more akin to the 'jest' than to the 'joke's) and a radical-modernist work like Finnegans Waks does not consist in their opposite proportional combinations of 'expression' and 'repression'.7 The case of Joyce suggests rather that 'radical' works are marked by a mutual intensification of the two. The limit-case is probably that of Dadaist phonetic poetry. These strange texts effect the most extreme possible contraction of the signifier; and they are, of course, 'unintelligible'. In them, everything is said and yet nothing is said: expression is total, and totally repressed.8

The Problem of Value

Of his final chapter, on 'Marxism and Aesthetic Value', Eagleton writes: '[it] seems to me little more than a provisional clearing of the ground on which a genuine discussion of these matters could be conducted'. His modesty is commendable; but at the same time, his achievement should not be under-estimated. The pages in which he 'clears the ground' are among the best in the book, and among the most lucid and cogent to be found anywhere in the corpus of Marxist reflection on the subject. His arguments against those who recommend abstention from qualitative judgment, whether on 'theoreticist' or on 'populist' grounds, are admirable for their combination of tact and trenchancy; and his critique of 'transcendentalist' and 'historicist' conceptions of literary value is unanswerable.

It might be asked, however, if the logic of his critique is fully sustained in the counter-conception which he then goes on to elaborate. 'There is no "immanent" value', he argues, in opposition to formalism and historicism, 'no value which is not *transitive*. Literary value is a phenomenon which is produced in that ideological appropriation of the text, that "consumptional production" of the work, which is the act of

The 'thought' of the jest, unlike that of the tendentious joke, is uncontroversial; its pleasureable qualities are in this sense entirely gratuitous.

Figuression is used loosely here, and does not imply an expressive subject of any kind.
This does not imply a defeatist attitude towards the possibility of a revolutionary art. The purposes of socialism are not those of modernist utopianism.

other words, the question of value must always be posed historically, in the form, valuable to whom and in what conditions? 'When Shakespeare's texts cease to make us think, when we get nothing out of them, they will cease to have value.' (p. 169) The terms of Eagleton's aphorism are perhaps overly broad (who is 'we' and what is it that we 'think'?), but the thesis that it expresses is essentially correct. However, this thesis is linked with a second, in which the notion of 'immanence' is apparently reinstated. Arguing against the idea, sponsored by Trotsky among others, that 'great' works of art are those which somehow 'transcend' their conditions of production to 'speak' to the 'feelings and moods' of remote posterity, Eagleton maintains that 'valuable art comes into being not despite its historical limitations... but by virtue of them'. What is involved in such cases is rather a special kind of relationship with history: it is the 'production of the hegemonic ideological formation from a particular regressive standpoint within it which lays the basis for literary value'. (p. 181) The emphasis of this argument is again on the relational character of value, but in a different and much weaker sense. For although it is advanced in an avowedly anti-historicist context, it implies that value is imparted to the work by its historical conditions of production and that this value is constant—in a word, that value is after all, in this sense at least, 'immanent'.

Marxism in Literary Criticism

The distinction between Eagleton's 'conditions of possibility of literary value' and standard historicist formulae, although problematic, is real; to foreclose it, as if saying that the problems that beset it are more grave than those it attempts to confront, would be crude and counter-productive. Yet it cannot be overlooked that his hypothesis is, among other things, a de facto ratification of the works discussed in his fourth chapter, Ideology and Literary Form'; and that these works are all major land-marks in the already-constituted 'tradition' of English literature as defined by the established literary criticism. Eagleton is, naturally, conscious of this, and moves rapidly to defend himself: 'nothing is to be gained by that form o literary ultra-leftism which dismisses received evaluations merely because they are the product of bourgeois criticism... It should not... be : matter of embarrassment that the literary texts selected for examination by Marxist criticism will inevitably overlap with those works which literary idealism has consecrated as "great": it is a question of challenging the inability of such idealism to render more than subjectivist accounts o the criteria of value.' (p. 162) There is undeniable point in Eagleton' warning-although it would be astonishing if the judgments of Marxis criticism turned out to be so many materialist doppelganger of those mad current by the foregoing idealist tradition. But what is equally undeniabl is the 'deviation' that actually occurs in the course of his own argument As an earlier critic has perceived, the structure of the argument is binery oscillating between a 'strange academicism' and expressly utopia presentiments of 'post-revolutionary boundlessness'.9 On the one hanc the real and present task of revaluing the existing, the given 'tradition'

Neil Belton, Towards a Marxist Literary Culture', International, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Sprir 1977), p. 63. See Eagleton, pp. 182-4

the strategic distinction between minimum and maximum programmes has taken hold even on the relatively peripheral front of aesthetics.

This distinction is, in my view, no less damaging in aesthetics than it has already proved to be in politics; but I do not believe that Eagleton can be held responsible for it. What it reflects is not the misapprehensions of an individual theorist but the objectively adverse cultural situation in which Marxist literary theory is today obliged to subsist. No critical discourse can be unaffected by the contemporaneous state of its object-practices. On the contrary, the cultural history of Europe in the twentieth century suggests strongly that the fundamental precondition of a major new departure in criticism is an anterior or simultaneous rupture in the practice of literature itself. The poetics of Tynjanov, Jakobson and Shklovsky could not have come into being without the immense stimulus of Russian Futurism. Benjamin's 'discovery' of the Transrspiel was neither an act of 'revaluation' within an established literary-academic perspective nor the reward of patient scholarship, but an oblique contribution to the theory and practice of German modernism in the Twenties. In England, I. A. Richards's aesthetics, Empson's criticism and Leavis's new 'histories' of poetry and the novel were in different ways the products of a culture still shaking from the impact of modernism. And in France, more recently, the nonveau roman played a major role in the emergence of la nonvelle critique. What, then, is our situation today? Firstly, and more generally, we are witnessing—and have been for several decades now—a steady decline in the status of literature within the general ensemble of artistic practices; film, and increasingly television, now dominate this ensemble and command a correspondingly large proportion of its total energy. Secondly, and in consequence of this, literature has virtually fallen into disuse as a site of avant-garde activity: the major aesthetic issues of today are debated across the terrain of cinema, and those of tomorrow will probably—and should, in all political responsibility—be increasingly concerned with television. Thus, the oppositional literary practices which alone could force new perceptions of the past and stimulate strategic reflection on the ways and means of a concretely revolutionary literature are for all practical purposes—and especially in England—non-existent. In such circumstances, no serious criticism can entirely escape the gravitational field of academicism. No one can say how long this blockage will persist; but for as long as it does, Marxist discourse on literature—even when it commands the intelligence and resourcefulness of Terry Eagleton's Criticism and Ideology—will remain, to some extent, Marxism in literary criticism.

Eurocommunism: Left and Right Variants

André Gunder Frank

Fernando Claudin was a leader of the Spanish Communist Party until his expulsion in 1964, and is the author of the already classic The Communist Mosement: from Comintern to Commform. The analysis of Eurocommunism and its relation to socialism put forward in his new book is very timely both because Claudin produced it after his return to post-Franco Spain, when the debate about Eurocommunism in that country and the problems faced by it in France and Italy as well had become highly topical, and also because its appearance followed closely upon publication of the much-discussed Eurocommunism and the State by Santiago Carrillo, general secretary of the PCE. Claudin's book carrillo be taken as a kind of reply, by the most authoritative 'lef Eurocommunist', to what was generally seen as a right-Communist book

Claudin analyses brilliantly the conditions in which Eurocommunisn arose and developed in Italy, France and Spain; the economic and political problems which, predictably, it is now confronting; and its part organization, political line/lines and inherent limitations. However, bethen 'derives' political conclusions arguing for a democratic and socialis Eurocommunism which, as we shall see, unfortunately do not accorwith his own very accurate analysis of Eurocommunism and it limitations, in whose light they do not seem realistically admissible.

Because of his judicious reflection upon historical and present reality alike, and because of the objective plausibility of his projections for the future, we can agree fully with Claudin on (among others) each of the following analytic theses. 1. World capitalism has since the mid-sixtic entered a new deep structural crisis of accumulation, analogous to that of the inter-war period. This crisis engenders a host of political problems and responses: notably those of Eurocommunism, and the bourgeon austerity policies which are imposed with or without the agreement of the Communists. 2. In the present stage of capitalism, monopoly is a integral aspect which is only reinforced by the crisis, and which contrary to the Eurocommunist thesis—can be combated only through successful anti-capitalist policy, without which an 'anti-monopoly' polic is impossible. (pp. 101–2) 3. However, there seems to be a kind of 'imperial historic compromise' between the United States and the Sovie

¹ The book first appeared in Paris in 1970; English translation, London 1975.

⁸ Eurocommunium and Secutium, Madrid 1977; English expanded edition, NLS 1978 (all pay references in the present text are to this edition).

³ Madrid 1976: English translation, London 1977.

⁴ See all of chapter 1, except the two final pages. An almost identical analysis can be found the present writer's Reflectment sobre he cruit acommics, Barcelona 1977.

be added, in opposition to a Eurocommunist democracy. (pp. 136-7) Thus, more than ever, the problem of political and military power is the key question. (p. 117)

Drawing on his exceptional theoretical knowledge and his practical experience (already reflected in his earlier book on the Communist movement). Claudin analyses with equal sureness the limitations sometimes inherent, sometimes apparently circumstantial—of the Eurocommunist parties and their policies, which are not even remotely adequate to the difficult economic and political problems they face. 1. The Eurocommunist parties, whether separately or collectively, almost entirely lack any international policy matching the international character of the economic and political problems confronting them. (pp. 143-6) 2. The Eurocommunists advocate an anti-monopoly policy that is, however, not anti-capitalist as such. But such a policy is impossible to carry through (pp. 101-2): for it is based on the false assumption that monopolies are like some benign tumour which can be cut out of the economic system, thus rendering the patient more competitive and healthy (a further misconception!) than ever. 3. The reformist policy of the Eurocommunist parties in this and other respects—such as their support for austerity plans like those of the Andreotti government in Italy or those provided for in the Monclos pact in Spain seeks, and what is more threatens in fact, to consolidate the bourgeois régimes, saving from bankruptcy even their politically most representative parties such as the Christian Democrats in Italy or Suarez's Union of the Democratic Centre in Spain, as the 'lesser evil in face of the fascist danger' (recalling the identical formula used within the Popular Fronts during the last crisis), and thus aiding capitalism to overcome its period of economic and political crisis. (pp. 109-10 and 118) 4. Placing their hopes in the lengthy duration of a stage of democratic stability (p. 107), the Eurocommunists argue for a kind of 'transition to the transition' to socialism (pp. 101-2), as the Communist Party of Chile put it during the Popular Unity government. This represents a highly dangerous policy, in that it permits the mobilization and organization of counter-revolution (p. 107); it is also doomed to failure by its reformism in dealing with the most burning economic problems, leading to a popular backlash in favour of the Right (see Chile). Meanwhile, the Communist parties brake the trade-union and mass struggle and even oppose it, as we have already seen in France, Italy and Spain. (pp. 108-9) Moreover, the Communist parties place excessive confidence in the repressive bodies (police and military) of the bourgeois order (p. 112)—even on occasion to the point where they call for their use, as in Chile yesterday and Italy today. They disarm instead of mobilizing and organizing the working class and other popular forces, to confront the key question of power when this arises at the moment of truth.

Beyond this accurate analysis of the present issues and policies of Eurocommunism, Claudin returns again and again to what he views as the Achilles heel of Eurocommunism today: the problem of democracy, particularly its absence—indeed negation, to date—in the internal organization of these parties. He devotes many pages of his book to arguing that, because of their lack of democracy, the Soviet Union and

for him socialism without democracy is a total contradiction in terms. He apparently feels that, in his view, he is interpreting a widespread popular sentiment in the West, in that many workers (and others) will not be willing to sacrifice democratic freedoms in order to instal socialism. Hence, the Eurocommunists will not be able to lead, or perhaps even accompany, the Western peoples to socialism, without first cutting once and for all the political umbilical cord which still binds them to the Soviet Union, and crossing the ideological Rubicon by stating that the latter and the other countries of the East are sot socialist. This fatal but liberatory step, taken with difficulty by Santiago Carrillo, the most independent (but not therefore the most socialist) of the Eurocommunists, wetting one toe on this side of the Rubicon, is seen by Claudin as a necessary—though not sufficient—condition for a Eurocommunist transition to socialism.

In honour of this powerful democratic compromise, Claudin finds himself perhaps a little blinded by its brightness as he passes on from his analysis of objective and organizational reality to pose two separate sets of alternatives, and to the political conclusions which he derives from each of these. Seeking to draw out the political conclusions of his analysis) Claudin formulates the first set of alternatives on page 26: 'the global crisis of the system poses the concrete question: is the crisis to be solved by an "austerity policy" which imposes the main burden of sacrifice on working people, while repairing the mechanisms of capitalism to equip them for a further prolonged period of existence—a solution which it would be difficult to conceive without a turn to more authoritarian policies?'—an eventuality which Claudin goes on to analyse subsequently, on the already cited pages 109-10 and 118, where he comments on the Eurocommunist collaboration in such policies—'O1 will the solution of the crisis introduce profound changes of economic and social structure which, even if they still involve sacrifices on the part of the masses, allow some sense of what a transition to socialism might be? The second option would necessarily involve the extension and deepening of democratic involvement in the political arena as well as in production...' Of course, Claudin himself comes out in favour of the second of these options—but in the name of a perspective which has little relationship with his own analysis of reality.

In the first place, the second option (as, in principle, the first also) contains a manifest contradiction, difficult if not possible to resolve, between the Eurocommunist support for 'policies which involve sacrifices on the par of the masses' and the 'extension and deepening' of democracy. In the second place, especially in the light of this same contradiction, neither objective conditions and Claudin's analysis of them, nor the latter's subjective wishes, offer a guarantee that these two options are in fact the only and exclusive ones. On the contrary, precisely Claudin's own analysis implies that this set of alternatives is incomplete, if not false, and that the most probable outcome will in fact be a third alternative: the extension of today's austerity policies to ultra-austerity measures designed to 'repai the mechanisms of capitalism to equip them for a further prolonge

The terminology is Claudin's own, although he used it not in this particular book, but at subsequent conference.

economic and social structure', which will not become the basis for a transition to socialism (and far less to a democratic socialism) but, on the contrary, for a transition towards an authoritarian society like that which Claudín himself glimpses on page 107 (and which in my little book cited in note 4 above I term, following George Orwell, '1984').

Claudin sets out the second set of alternatives/options, in terms of the political line and organization implicit in the democratic resolution of the first, on page 119: "The crucial need today on which any successful [read 'democratic'] solution to the crisis depends, is... [that] Between the adventure of extremism and the adventure of the "historic compromise" (understood as collaboration with the forces that constitute the most fundamental block to the kind of change the present situation demands). space must be found for a realistic policy of advance towards the democratic socialist transformation of Italian society. The tempo of the crisis does not allow for a very long delay.' Apart from wondering what this 'adventure of extremism' is which Claudin rejects without further explanation, objective reality itself and the very analysis which Claudin makes of it pose the question for us: why wast there be space for a realistic intermediate policy, especially if the crisis does not allow for much time to discover it and put it in train? No objective reason ordains this. If we can go along with Claudin in his subjective desire to find such space and such a policy, we must also insist on following him in his analysis of the way in which the authoritarian-i.e. anti-democratic and reformust, i.e. antisocialist—organization of the Eurocommunist parties prevents any such positive outcome, thereby vitiating not the objective analysis but rather the subjective desire. Once again, Claudin's democratic compromise obscures his historical analysis.

The question remains: by what political path does Claudin—albeit in visionary guise visualize this positive (in other words democraticsocialist) outcome being achieved? Answer: through a left Eurocommunism. Although Claudin does not leave this outcome entirely clear in the book itself, he has done so in other public and private statements. Claudin (like the present writer and many others) predicts an intensification of the economic and political crisis of capitalism, and assumes that this general crisis will act in such a way upon the Eurocommunist parties themselves and upon their allies (for example, through a sharpening of the contradiction between austerity policies and internal democracy) that there will be space—though very little time for the internal crisis of the Eurocommunist parties to be resolved through their conversion (or through the conversion of hegemonic segments of them in alliance with kindred organizations) into democratic-socialist parties: but still Eurocommunist ones, albeit of a left-wing variety. However, previous historical experience, and the magisterial analysis of it made by Claudin himself, not to speak of the 'not very long delay' which the crisis allows, all combine to make this democratic-socialist vision of Claudín's nothing more than a highly

[•] For example, at the conference organized in London by the journal Critique, on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the October Revolution.

Eurocommunism.

Thus Claudin, after his far-ranging trajectory, as loyalist and as critic, inside and outside the Communist party and movement, when all is said and done remains with the Communist parties, self-regenerated into democratic-socialist organizations, which are themselves to lead us to a left Eurocommunism. But it is hard to see where this Eurocommunism, however far to the left it may be, poses 'the key question of the problem of power', nor when or how it will come to do so—let alone resolve it positively. Even Carrillo, the most independent (though perhaps not the most democratic) of the Eurocommunists, does not so much as contemplate a socialist revolution, and would be the last to attempt one—even when the 'not very long delay' which History allows has already passed by.

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JUHLINAILLULVIUILS

Comment on Brenner

When I read Robert Brenner's article, I rubbed my eyes in wonderment. It was a long time since I had last looked at the debate on the transition from feudalism to capitalism in which I participated along with Maurice Dobb and others some thirty years ago (recently re-issued in expander form under the title The Transition from Fendalism to Capitalism, NLB 1976 cited in what follows from this edition). I certainly had no recollection whatever of having presented what Brenner calls a neo-Smithian account of the origins of capitalism (the growth of trade gives rise to increased division of labour, rising labour productivity, and a smooth transition to a self-generating process of capital expansion). Could it be that m memory had completely failed me, or was Brenner making it all up out can apparently fertile imagination?

On re-reading the text, I was relieved to find that my memory was not a fault. I did indeed put much emphasis on the growth of trade, but m interpretation of its significance for the use of capitalism was entirel different from that attributed to me by Brenner. Put briefly, my argumer was 1. that trade undermined and disintegrated the feudal system; and : in Marx's words (quoted on p. 50): 'The circulation of commodities is the starting point of capital. Commodity production, trade, form the historic preconditions under which it arises. World trade and the world market ope up in the sixteenth century the modern life history of capital.'

Please note that there is absolutely no implication here of a smooth an continuous transition. In fact I was at pains to stress my agreement wis Dobb that the end of feudalism and the beginning of capitalism we separated by some two centuries. Nor should 'historical preconditions' leading with effective cause. Here again, I made my agreement wis Dobb as clear as I could: 'In general, I agree fully with Dobb's analysis, the rise of capitalism. It seems to me that his treatment of this problem exceptionally clear and illuminating: I would be inclined to rate it the

¹ Robert Brenner, 'On the Origins of Capitalist Development: a Crinque of Neo-Smith Marxism', MLR 104, July/August 1977.

Capitalism].' (p. 52) And I think I can safely assure Brenner that for both Dobb and me the nature of the problem as well as the general outlines of its solution were laid out with unexampled clarity by Marx in Part VIII of Volume I of Capital ('The So-called Primitive Accumulation'). Under the circumstances, I cannot imagine where Brenner got the idea (p. 39) that my view of the transition implies that capitalist class relations are a result rather than a basis of capitalist development. Unless, of course, he also wants to level the same criticism at Marx and Dobb.

In conclusion, let me say 1. that Brenner's trouble is rooted in a failure to distinguish, analytically as well as chronologically, between the decline of feudalism and the rise of capitalism; and 2. that much of what he says about the rise of capitalism seems to me interesting and valuable.

Paul Sweey

Reply to Sweezy

Readers will have to judge for themselves whether or not I have mischaracterized Paul Sweezy's arguments. I do not think my understanding of his case is idiosyncratic. Other writers, most recently John Merrington in his "Town and Country in the Development of Capitalism" (NLR 93, September—October 1975, pp. 71—5), have emphasized not only the derivation of Sweezy's arguments from Henri Pirenne's, but the parallel between the arguments of both of them and that of Adam Smith—especially, Smith's 'smooth', evolutionary interpretation of the transition through the rise of trade and the division of labour.

In his 'Comment', Sweezy once again states that he thinks that 'trade undermined and disintegrated the feudal system'. I cannot repeat my argument here, but I stressed the analogies with Smith in Sweezy's view that trade arose from outside the feudal system (The Transition from Fendalism to Capitalism, NLB 1976, pp. 39-40); that it gave rise more or less directly to 'a system of production for exchange alongside the feudal system of production for use' (Transition, p. 42); and that the former more or less directly destroyed and surpassed the latter by virtue of its superior efficiency and productive power. As Sweezy stated, 'The superior efficiency of more highly specialized production, the greater gains to be made by producing for the market rather than for immediate use, the greater attractiveness of town life for the worker: these factors made it only a matter of time before the new system, once strong enough to stand on its own feet, would win out.' (Transition, pp. 43-4) In my NLR cssay (p. 41, note 18 and p. 14), I did state that Sweezy's arguments appear to me ambivalent and self-contradictory, and that he seems aware of the difficulties involved with the trade-centred approach—especially the problems of class formation and class conflict which appear to be posed by the different paths of development of different European regions (e.g. the 'second serfdom' in Eastern Europe). But to the extent he tries to deal with them—that is, attempts to take account of the processes of class

seems to me that he leaves the gibegins to argue from the viewpo attack.

Sweezy's reference to what he bel processes of the decline of feudali long period of time which separat of Dobb-does not appear to me develop this distinction through commodity production' between argued, this was not clearly we Sweezy did not specify the deve commodity production', most est what processes did it give rise functioning differ from that of ca by no means simple to determine capitalist commodity production and class conflict associated accumulation', to which Sweezi Sweezy did not clearly specify which prevailed under 'pre-ca manner in which they fettered i capitalism or, for that matter, th destructive processes of 'so-calle ostensibly necessitated. Nor did than the rise of the market, madaccumulation' to take place and a others). On the other hand, Swei phase of 'pre-capitalist commodiindividual market-producing industrialists (Transition, pp. 5 1–2 relations. He did not, indeed, production' would not advance toward fully-developed capitalis would be expected in a system individual producers giving we efficient capitalist enterprises of co-operative production and inve-Sweezy's 'Critique' could give tl feudalism into 'pre-capitalist con commodity production' into autonomous, 'discontinuous' pr conflict was not made clear; or to-the necessary effect of-the

AND THE PARTY MACH

Timpanaro's Materialist Challen
PCF: Out of the Fortress
Bukharin's Last Years
Dual Power and the State
On Under-developed Capitalism

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The defeat of the left in the 1978 French general elections has had epercussions far beyond the national frontiers of France. The imperialist lowers have been reassured by the unexpected prospect of renewed tability in a key country. The French working class, which in May 1968 howed itself capable of a far higher degree of coordinated mobilization han any of its peers in the advanced capitalist world since 1945, has beent least temporarily—demoralized and disoriented. Yet what was formerly he most monolithic of the mass Communist Parties of Western Europe has enerated, in defeat, a public debate within its own ranks whose plain peaking and substantive stakes have no parallel since the twenties. In this ebate, the most dramatic and eloquent intervention to date has been that of ouis Althusser, the most eminent living Communist philosopher. In the ext published here, which appeared as a series of articles in 'Le Monde' hortly after the elections, Althusser indicts from the Left—the strategy, rganizational practice and ideology of the PCF leadership, and puts orward demands for their transformation.

he work of Sebastiano Timpanaro—whose 'On Materialism' and 'The reudian Slip' were published by NLB in 1976—constitutes one of the most mic contributions to Marxist thought in recent years. The full significance f his theoretical work has, however, yet to be registered in the English-peaking countries. Raymond Williams here sets about evaluating 'impanaro's intellectual achievement as a whole, in an essay which epresents a rare example in recent years of confrontation, at a deep level, etween two Marxist thinkers across major national-cultural frontiers. He kes up Timpanaro's challenge on such central topics as man's relation to ature; the impact on Marxism of the natural sciences; the imperatives of iology; the individual condition; the validity and limitations of sychoanalysis; the role of linguistics in the human sciences; and at a more

Later this year, NLB will be publishing Nicos Poulantzas's latest book, a theoretical work on the State. In this issue of the Review we print the political epilogue to the volume, in which Poulantzas—himself a defeated candidate for the Communist Party of the Interior in the last Greel elections—develops with exceptional clarity themes which, though the represent an increasingly influential current of thought within Eurocommunism, have hitherto remained largely implicit. His argument against the contemporary relevance of the classical Leninist perspective, of the emergence of dual power and the 'smashing' of the bourgeois State have the virtue of posing decisive political questions for the labour movement. They form a case which cannot be ignored, but must be put to the dual test of the historical experience of the workers' movement, and the concrete analysis of contemporary capitalist political systems. Poulantzas' challenge to central theses of revolutionary Marxism will be taken up in future issues of the Review.

NLR roy also contains a graphic memoir by the Soviet historian Ro Medvedev of the last years of Bukharin's life. Based on all available sources including above all extensive discussion with the latter's widow (now, afte almost twenty years in labour camps, once again living in Moscow) Medvedev's narrative at once adds to our knowledge of this grim an pathetic finale to the career of one of the principal Bolshevik leaders, an constitutes a fresh indictment of Stalin's terror and those who refuse to thi day to face up fully to its nature and consequences.

Problems of Materialism

There are inevitable difficulties in any serious materialism. In its earliest phases i has a comparative simplicity of definition, since it rests on a rejection o presumptive hypotheses of non-material or metaphysical prime causes, and defines its own categories in terms of demonstrable physical investigations. Ye such definitions are subject to two inherent difficulties: first, that in the continuing process of investigation, the initial and all successive categories are inherently subject to radical revision, and in this are unlike the relatively protected categories of presumed or revealed truths; second, that in the very course o opposing systematic universal explanations of many of the common-ground processes, provisional and secular procedures and findings tend to be grouped into what appear to but never can be systematic, universal and categorical explanations of the same general kind. Thus material investigation, grounded in the rejection of categorical hypotheses of an unverifiable kind, and basing its own confidence in a set of provisional working procedures and demonstrations, find itself pulled nevertheless towards closed generalizing systems: finds itself

at any point in its history, to find itself stuck with its own recent generalizations, and in defence of these to mistake its own character: to suppose that it is a system like others, of a presumptive explanatory kind, or that it is reasonable to set up contrasts with other (categorical) systems, at the level not of procedures but of its own past 'findings' or 'laws'. What then happens is obvious. The results of new material investigations are interpreted as having outdated 'materialism'. Or, conversely, defence of 'the materialist world-view', specified in certain positions now frozen in time, involves contempt for or rejection of apparently incompatible evidence and procedures, and their categorical assignment to systems taken to be alternative and of the same kind: in the ordinary rhetoric, 'idealism'. Intellectual confusion is then severe enough, but it is made worse by the fact, on the one hand, that much of the new 'evidence' and 'procedures'. especially in its interpreted and theoretically presumed forms, is indeed incompatible, not only (which is not important) with the frozen 'worldview' but with the significant criteria of the materialist enterprise; and by the fact, on the other hand, that within the world-view, however frozen, there is still hard, often very hard evidence of a kind that is indeed likely to be smothered in the difficult process of the search for genuine ' compatibilities and necessary reformulations.

These are among the most evident intellectual difficulties of the contemporary argument about materialism, but there is a further set of political and cultural considerations. Materialist modes of investigation have been historically connected, though never exclusively, with certain radical forms of social and political struggle. In Marxism, especially, this connection has been raised to the level of a conscious alliance. It is then not only that there can be confusion between certain frozen forms and certain kinds of political commitment and action: a confusion that reached bizarre extremes in identification of socialism with selected received generalizations—the brutal equation of certain (material) 'laws' with certain (political) loyalties. It is also that, in other political areas, affiliation to socialism appeared to involve affiliation to 'materialism', not as a body of evidence and procedures but as a verbal category: to be a socialist was to be, by definition, a materialist, even if the relevant actual positions held were of a kind to which material investigation would be (indeed sometimes by prior theoretical assertion) inappropriate or inapplicable. Again, more widely, necessary processes of investigation and re-investigation, over a range from political strategies to philosophical problems and cultural practices, were either dismissed, within the received verbal categories, as 'anti-materialist' or 'idealist', or were, by the proponents themselves, in reaction against the frozen forms and their political and cultural consequences, carefully distanced from materialism or the more convenient 'vulgar materialism'.

It is in this confused and complex situation, within the interactions and the failures to interact of politics, science and philosophy, that the question of 'materialism' has to be raised again, at the most general level. The significance of the recent work of Sebastiano Timpanaro is that he has not only raised the question; adequately read, he has provoked it.

Timpanaro's work is available in English in two volumes: On Materialis. and The Frendian Slip. 1 He has also published studies of nineteenth century Italian culture, including an important account of Leopardi. C Materialism is a collection of essays, of which the most substantial at 'Considerations on Materialism' and 'Structuralism and its Successors The other three essays are on 'Praxis and Materialism', the materialism (Engels, and Korsch and Lenin. The Frendian Slip is a more consecutiv volume, beginning from a philological examination of Freud' interpretations of verbal errors and proceeding to a substantia examination of the relations between materialism and psychoanalysis The mode of the writing is in the best sense polemical. There ar substantial occasional statements of position, and other significar references and allusions. But the writing is strongest when it has anothe position and text to engage with; indeed, in the case of the professionall minute investigation of the relevant Freudian texts, so strong as to b overpowering. Yet in substance the writing is not criticism: it is a deepl engaged polemic, with substantial political implications and intentions against major contemporary tendencies in Western Marxism, notably th work and the effects of the Frankfurt School and of Althusser, and, mor broadly, what Timpanaro calls 'voluntarism' and Platonist scientism'. Ha central point of attack is on the question of materialism, from which al these tendencies are seen as divergent, and he is unusual in summoning to his aid, in what remains primarily a set of philosophical arguments, the work of natural scientists. For a generation, now, there has been as unusual uneasiness between Marxism and the natural sciences Timpanaro regrets this, and argues to overcome it, not only because there are then gaps in knowledge and failures in its development, but becausthrough the gaps, and from both sides, pour the enemies of materialism

This is an attractive and provocative stance. Its many challenges deserve the most careful consideration. Dissenting immediately from one of his most basic formulations, on 'the links between the struggle for communism and the struggle against nature', I find, nevertheless, so closs a convergence of interests and sympathies that it is not only at exceptional pleasure to read his books but important to try to engage with them. I propose to discuss, centrally, the very difficult relations between his understanding of materialism and his uses of the concept of 'nature' and then, more briefly, his critique of psychoanalysis and his spirited and indispensable critique of structural linguistics and its extensions to structuralism.

Man and Nature

Timpanaro's most general definition of the fundamentals of materialism can be accepted, at first sight, as it stands: 'By materialism we understand above all acknowledgment of the priority of nature over "mind", or it you like, of the physical level over the biological level, and of the biological level over the socio-economic and cultural level: both in the sense of chronological priority (the very long time which supervened

¹ On Materialism, NLB 1975; The Frenchien Shp, NLB 1976

of man), and in the sense of the conditioning which nature still exercises on man and will continue to exercise at least for the foreseeable future. 2 It 18 difficult to see how anyone could deny the intention of the first proposition, though it is better expressed in its specifying than in its general terms. The cautionary notation of 'mind' needs to be extended also to 'nature', but there can be no serious argument against the existence of a physical world before life and of other life-forms before man. And it is important that while these facts are never denied, within any relevant area of argument, they are quite often dismissed as banalities which have little practical bearing on the more interesting questions that he ahead. One of the excuses for this impatience is that the general terms used to summarize the enormous and complex body of facts, on which the propositions necessarily rest, are shot through with inherently subsequent interpretations of a philosophical and cultural character. Thus it is not unproblematic to say that 'nature' has 'priority over' 'mind', but we can only approach these problems in good faith if we have, with full seriousness, taken the weight of the astronomic, geological and biological evidence before entering the more congenial ground of the humanist categories. And it is in this area, at first sight, that the effect of the declining contribution of the natural sciences to the general culture of Marxism has been most apparent. While the sense of proportion imposed by this fundamental materialism is either forgotten or dismissed as a preliminary banality, the way is indeed open for every kind of obscurantism and evasion.

Yet it is in the area of the second proposition that the most serious damage is actually done. And this is more difficult to see, because the language in which its undoubtedly correct intention is expressed is even more inherently problematic. 'The conditioning which nature still exercises on man': the problem here is the use of 'nature', coming through in the language as the humanist personification of all that is 'not man', to describe a very complex set of conditions which are indeed, in part, quite extrinsic or extrinsic with only marginal qualifications (the range is from the solar system through the physical composition of the planet to the atmosphere), but which are also, and crucially, intrinsic to human beings (evolved physical organs, the genetic inheritance). Thus a particular linguistic structure, the separation and contrast between 'nature' and 'man', largely developed in periods of the dominance of idealist and humanist thought, makes it very difficult for us to move from the complex and differential facts which are indeed our material and physical conditions to any statement of the general relationship between these 'conditions' and what, within the linguistic complex, we still isolate as 'conditioned'.

Timpanaro writes: 'We cannot... deny or evade the element of passivity in experience: the external situation which we do not create but which imposes itself on us.' This is another attempt to express 'the conditioning which nature still exercises on man'. But it leaves much unresolved. There is indeed an 'external situation' which is beyond human choice or control:

²On Materialism, p. 34

^{*} Ibid

emphasize this, while adding that there are field features, even at this ieven, which are already interactive with human industry and politics. And it is right to describe all these reaches as conditions. To see them either as simple 'raw material' for 'man's conquest of nature', as in the dominative progressivism shared by many tendencies in the nineteenth century but now-late in the twentieth century-more exclusive to a predatory late capitalism, or on the other hand as mere banal pre-conditions for the more interesting human social enterprise, is indeed damaging. They are necessary conditions and as such necessary elements of the relations of all life. But then what can properly be described as an 'external situation' modulates, in complex ways, into what is already an interactive situation', and then, crucially, into an area of material conditions in which it is wholly unreasonable to speak of 'nature' as distinct from 'man' or to use the (political) language of 'impose on' and 'exercise', now terms of a (dualist) relationship which misrepresent the precise constituted materiality which the argument began by offering to emphasize.

Thus 'the element of passivity in experience' emerges as a key question. 'Passive' is already a curious description of our actual relations to the far and middle reaches of the physical universe, and would be misleading in its near reaches. For it is not at these levels a question of passivity or activity, as alternative human responses. There are dimensions quite beyond us, or there are basic forces—the obvious examples are gravity and light—which have entered so deeply into our constituted existence that they are conditions of everything we are and do, over the whole range from the most passive to the most active modes. What 'passive', in one of its senses—the relatively 'given', the relatively 'unwilled'—might usefully emphasize is, first, the character of many of our basic physical processes, which are indeed conditions of life; and second, though with more difficulty, something of the character of our participation in such matters as our genetic inheritance. In either case 'constitutive' would be better then 'passive', for what matters is what follows from the striking of this particular relational and emotional note. To re-emphasize, as a fundamental materialism, the inherent physical conditions—2 specific universe, a specific planet, a specific evolution, specific physical lives from which all labour and all consciousness must take their origins, is right and necessary. Failure not only to acknowledge these conditions, but to continue to take them into active account, has indeed, as Timpanaro indicates, led to shallow and limited kinds of Marxist and other political and social thought, and has left open a large and unavoidable area of experience and knowledge which has been repeatedly occupied by an indifferent positivism or, worse, by significantly popular kinds of irrationalism (astrology, earth-cults, new theologies of collective subjectivity, forms of organized physical self-manipulation).

The direction of Timpanaro's response is, then, initially very welcome. But 'passive', we soon come to see, carries its own freight. When he is arguing, correctly, that many Marxists overlook, or acknowledge as mere banalities, our fundamental physical-material existence and processes, it is remarkable how often he specifies this existence and these processes in their negative and limiting capacity, and how rarely in any other sense. He is, of course, right to specify the effects of old age, of disease, of inherited

solar system and the continuing conditioning presence of many more immediate natural forces. But this leads us to an argument which has already taken place, in response to existentialism and its interactions with Marxism. The existentialist emphasis of anguish, isolation and 'the absurd' was replied to with socialist emphases of comradeship, solidarity and 'the future', or with more general emphases of love, relatedness and 'community'. Each emphasis is a version of response, but is presented as an account of the true 'human condition'. One level of argument is then the exchange of alternative specifications. But the most serious level of argument must be the analysis of how the really basic conditions of life—the conditions of physical existence and survival—are perceived, selected and interpreted.

For the crucial question is the extent to which these fundamental physical conditions and processes affect or qualify the social and historical interpretations and projects which are the central specifications of Marxism. But then it is at once necessary to resolve this general question, resting on its general categories of 'nature' and 'man', into more precise and more differentiated questions. These seem to me to be three in number. First, what is the effect of scientific evidence of a physical kind, notably that of the solar system and of our planet and its atmosphere, on the proposition (ideology?) of the 'conquest of nature' which has often been associated with Marxism? Second, what factors, if any, in our evolutionary inheritance qualify the project (ideology?) of absolute human liberation? Third, what is the real relation between projects of human liberation cast in collective and epochal terms and the physical conditions which determine or affect actual individual human lives?

The 'Conquest of Nature'

On the first question it is undeniable, historically, that Marxism includes a triumphalist version of 'man's conquest of nature'. Nor is this merely a variant of the tradition; in one form or another it lies near the source. But it is then important to recognize that, in both its moderate and its extreme forms, the notion of the 'conquest of nature' belongs not simply to Marxism but to a whole period of bourgeois thought. Indeed, it became an almost inevitable generalization from the extraordinary achievements in material transformation of the industrial revolution and of advances in the physical sciences. And in one relatively unproblematic emphasis, it is a sustainable generalization, giving substance to the basic emphasis of historical materialism. Human beings have, by associated labour, moved in thousands of ways out of passive dependence on their environment, and out of mere adaptive marginality at its edges. The reshaping, remaking and innovative transformation of the pre-human material world is absolutely significant, historically. But of course this can only be described as the 'conquest of nature' if the initial terms of a separated 'man' and 'nature' are taken for granted. And it is to the extent that they have been taken for granted that real theoretical deformations have occurred.

For it is of course apparent, after all the achievements and projected

level of the physical universe and the solar system, which are still and in any reasonable projection beyond our control. Moreover, even within the more practical definition of the project, of sustaining full and free human life on our planet within foreseeable historical terms, that part of the 'conquest' which is represented by scientific knowledge now increasingly shows us the complexities and the often unwanted effects of that other part of the 'conquest' which is physical appropriation and transformation. The triumphalist version overrides all this real knowledge. Faced with the predictable end of the solar system, it responds with the by no means exclusively or even predominantly Marxist projection of emigration of the species to new stars, and bypasses the question of whether this remote project would not also be a change of species. Faced with the limits and complexities of appropriation and transformation, on our own planet, it extends the correct and reasonable response of improved knowledge and renewed effort into a brash mystique of 'overcoming all obstacles'. But it can now be clearly seen that this triumphalist version is, in an exceptionally close correspondence, the specific ideology of imperialism and capitalism, whose basic concepts—limitless and conquering expansion; reduction of the labour process to the appropriation and transformation of raw materials—it exactly repeats.

How then did Marxism, at any stage, come to be compromised by it? In part by the infection of its formative period. In part, also, by failure to carry through its own fundamental restatement of the 'man'-'nature' relationship: its decisive emphasis on the intricate and constitutive processes of 'man-in-nature', with labour as the specifying instance of an always significant, always dynamic, and always—though differentially limited set of material relationships. In this world of a properly materialist history there is no room for the separated abstract categories of 'nature' and 'man', but then what often happens is that they are made falsely equivalent, or that the historical process is seen as substituting one-'man'-for the other. This soon becomes a compromise with triumphalism. But it is then ironic to see the argument merely running in reverse. Timpanaro correctly and valuably re-emphasizes the weight of the natural forces that are beyond our actual or probable control, yet comes to sum them up as 'nature's oppression of man'.4 Given that relationship, his argument then moves to consideration of the appropriate philosophical and ethical response to that kind of 'fact': a materialist pessimism, which adds rejection of the consolations of triumphalism to the established rejection of the consolations of religion.

But at one level, certainly, this is beside the point. Settled and universalizing emotional or philosophical responses to the complexities of the real material process are in fact themselves residual from prematerialist religion and philosophy. Neither materialist triumphalism nor materialist pessimism is of any material help in the necessary processes of an extended secular knowledge and of definitions and redefinitions of our social processes in its light. To the extent that these are genuinely secular and materialist, they involve the whole range from new major

⁴ Ibid., p. 67.

breeding and land reclamation—to new major difficulties—say the plutonium economy. In all relevant secular terms, what is needed at this level is not 'philosophy' at all, but associated science and labour, under conditions to be achieved only by socialist transformation of control of these means of production.

Biology and Liberation

The second question, on the limiting factors of our evolutionary inheritance, has been widely posed in contemporary bourgeois thought. There has been an extraordinary revival of some of the crudest forms of Social Darwinism, with emphasis on the inherent and controlling force of the aggressive instinct, the territorial imperative, the genetically determined hunter, the lower 'beast' brain, and so on. These crude evasions of historical and cultural variation, these even cruder rationalizations of the crises of the imperialist and capitalist social order, have to be patiently analysed and refuted, point by point. But the difficulty to which Timpanaro draws attention has also to be remembered. There is indeed some danger, in response to these intolerable confusions of biological and social facts, of another kind of triumphalism, in which the emphasis of human history and human culture simply ignores or treats as a preliminary banality the relatively stable biological conditions which are at least elements of much human cultural activity. Timpanaro relates this problem, correctly, to some wellknown difficulties of the formula of base and superstructure, and ir particular to certain kinds of art which clearly relate to elements of our biological condition, often much more strongly than to elements of our socio-historical experience. It is, of course, at once added that these elements of the biological condition are mediated by socio-historica experience and by its cultural forms; but Timpanaro is right to argue that this mediation provides no basis for that still common kind of reduction in which the biological is a mere datum and all the effective working social and historical. He usefully reminds us that certain works of ar expressing feelings of sexual love, of fear of death, of grief and loss at the death of others, while undoubtedly varied by particular cultural forms retain elements of common content which enable them to communicate actively and not only as documents, beyond and across historical period and cultures.

As a matter of fact he could have taken even stronger examples, since these are cultural responses to and within biological conditions, and what needs to be estimated, in each case, is the character of the mix. The deeper significance of a relatively unchanging biological human condition is probably to be found in some of the basic material processes of the making of art: in the significance of rhythms in music and dance an language, or of shapes and colours in sculpture and painting. Because as is always made, there can of course be no reduction of works of this kin to biological conditions. But equally, where these fundamental physic conditions and processes are in question, there can be no reduction either to simple social and historical circumstances. What matters here—and is a very significant amendment of orthodox Marxist thinking about artist that art work is itself, before everything, a material process; and that

includes certain biological processes, especially those relating to body movements and to the voice, which are not a mere substratum but are at times the most powerful elements of the work.

Yet to put the matter in this way is again to emphasize an open, secular recognition and inquiry. It is not to reserve a 'human nature' as a 'long wave' against the 'short waves' of history, as Timpanaro comes close to implying. It is rather to acknowledge—and indeed to emphasize against the simpler forms of sociological and superstructural reductionism—that intricate and varying set of productive processes, and of the human situations which they realize and communicate, in which the physical facts of the human condition are permanently and irreducibly important. Once again, it is not a matter of limits only. Moreover, though these real physical conditions qualify some projects of absolute liberation—such as the Shavian-progressivist 'liberation from this flesh-stuff'—it is significant that many contemporary projects of liberation, though at times too exclusively, and even as false alternatives to social liberation, have decisively reclaimed our physical existence and fulfilment as inseparable from any significant project of political and economic liberation.

Social Projects and the Individual

The second question here blends with the third, on the relation between our physical conditions and our social projects. Timpanaro argues eloquently for the acknowledgment of those physical realities which are there whether there is social change or not. We become ill, we become old, we die, and it is indeed a kind of petty bullying, at times a seemingly incurable shallowness, to respond to these conditions with an overriding reference to history or to a cause or to a future. That kind of reference belongs to the cultures of absolutism or to the closer contemporary cultures of bureaucracy. To die for a cause, and to be honoured for it, is one thing. To attempt to override the physical realities which persist in and through and beyond all historical causes is quite another. Indeed to restore this substance of human life to all effective social perspectives is a matter of great urgency. First, because no significant social perspective can exclude these substantial experiences, or treat them as marginal. It is only by infection from the social orders that we are fighting that any such exclusion or reduction is possible. But also, second, it is the perspective that then suffers, since the people who hold to it, and who struggle according to it, are all themselves within these conditions. What happens as this becomes clear, in millions of individual lives, is profoundly difficult to analyse. Many people have said, as they become old or ill, and as they now know that they will die, that the long historical project becomes meaningless or indifferent. Timpanaro is properly on his guard against this, for it is the mere converse of the error of overriding such realities in the name of a historical cause.

Yet the emotional freight which is carried by his particular definition of our basic physical conditions exerts, at just this point, an ambiguous

inescapable fact of 'our' physical condition that for a time 'we' are youn and healthy and active. It is also a fact that this condition offers u abundant opportunities of physical fulfilment which, though of cours related to the character of our specific social order, are hardly ever wholl determined by it. Thus in one equally relevant definition of our basi physical condition we have many, and at times more immediatel accessible, opportunities of happiness in the exercise of our physic resources than in the project of social liberation. In the advance capitalist countries, in our own day, a deduction of priorities from th version of the basic relations has been very widely made. It is not juwhen staring death or disability in the face that we can question or draback from revolutionary effort. It is also when sexual love, the love (children, the pleasures of the physical world are immediately and ver powerfully present. To attempt to deny the reality of the kinds (fulfilment that are possible in these ways, even under repressive soci orders, to say nothing of social systems which have cleared significan space for them, comes in the end to appear a desperate dogmatism.

But then why is the question posed in such ways, leading to every kind false solution? Timpanaro's purpose is almost equally to check bo collective and subjectivist forms of triumphalism. Intellectually he is the on sure if not fully worked ground. But emotionally there is less re balance. The profound sadness of our epoch is fully expressed in t necessary reminders of our continuing physical limits. Yet the tr sources of this depth of sadness are surely predominantly historical. F in the most basic physical terms our epoch can be characterized (if t ethical term is appropriate) as one of widening happiness: the limits of c age, of disease, of infant mortality, have been significantly pushed bac in an extending area of world society. More people are living longer, a healthier and better fed, than at any time in human history. The barriers extending these conditions from the richer to the poorer countries a economic and political, and not of some basic physical character. Even t relation between population and resources is a political and econon issue. So why then a materialist pessimism? There is ground for a sense tragedy in the long and bloody crisis of the ending of an imperialist a capitalist order. But at the most basic physical level there is only t contradiction intrinsic to any conscious life process, and this is no settled but a dynamic contradiction, in which life is not only negated death but affirmed by birth, and practical consciousness itself at or defines and redefines its proper limits. In any fully materialist perspectiit then seems impossible to rely on any singular political or ethi dimension, and especially on the received alternatives of triumphalism pessimism. The properly objective process, to which these alternativ are directed, is itself contradictory and dynamic; while at any point, in life of an individual or in the history of a movement, there is an intrin variability in the positions from which this nevertheless object process is seen. A materialist ethics, like a materialist politics, has then be grounded in these inherent relational conditions, only not relativism, which is merely their registration, but as activity, which is conscious effort towards their common realization as human history.

Interestingly, it is in his critique of psychoanalysis that Timpanaro most clearly moves from the presumptive selectivity of a materialist pessimism, basically derived from Leopardi, to more open materialist perspectives. Yet it is to be expected that this part of his work will encounter the most negative reactions, ranging from suspicion and hostility to indifference. The ideological roots and the vocabulary of psychoanalysis are now very deep in Western culture. The arrival of Timpanaro's kind of sceptic, deploying analytic skills very similar to those of the 'higher criticism' of religion, seems likely to repeat a moment of cultural history. For what Timpanaro first engages, from the whole psychoanalytic system, is Freud's analysis of verbal slips and errors—the persuasive 'psychopathology of everyday life'. Some central concepts of memory and forgetting, and then of repression and of ways of overcoming it, are thus tackled from an unusual direction.

Now to anyone trained in the interpretation of texts the Freudian analysis of specific errors ought always to have seemed problematic. I remember my own scepticism at first reading, and the instant diagnosis of this scepticism which the epigoni deployed. But Timpanaro is much better than a sceptic; he uses, with exceptional thoroughness and precision, the material evidence of a whole body of practice and analysis concerned with errors and failures of memory, and especially the manifest evidence of successive texts as studied in philology and textual criticism. It is then not only that he can show the arbitrary and tendentious character of certain Freudian interpretations but, much more usefully, that he contributes a body of relatively remote specialist knowledge to the central task of classifying varying types of verbal error and failure of memory: a classification which need not be taken as excluding certain psychoanalytic hypotheses for certain kinds of error. If this is set beside the now very extensive physiological investigations of the processes of memory and especially short-term memory, we reach a fully materialist position in which the evidence of cultural history, of situational analysis and of physiological investigation can be brought together and cross-checked.

Yet what has ordinarily happened, even inside 'psychology', with its variation into what are often non-communicating schools, but even more in the general culture, with its eclectic reliance on 'scientifically founded concepts' derived from evidence and procedures never rigorously examined, is the diffusion of a set of systems which even when they are materialist in character—and many of the most widely diffused are evidently and even proudly not—take on the appearance of general human explanations. Thus one can be asked, in the same mode as for an opinion of a film or a novel, whether one 'accepts the findings' of Freud or of Skinner or of Lacan, without any significant realization that all such 'findings' depend on criteria of evidence and on the (contested) theoretical presuppositions of both the evidence and the criteria. (These considerations would be relevant, of course, also to the 'opinion' of the film or the novel). What Timpanaro has then done is to indicate, and especially to the 'literary' reader of psychology and psychoanalytic theory, certain indispensable considerations on the nature of verbal analysis as evidence. If at times it reads like taking a sledge-hammer to a

There are then two further considerations. First that in psychology and psychoanalytic theory, as in the related areas of anthropology and theoretical sociology, there are special problems for any materials critique in their typical employment of concepts—which may or may no be 'theory'—which have a unique double character, in that they at internally held to be 'findings' from empirical evidence and yet at th same time are quite rapidly diffused in forms of discourse usual) dependent on concepts founded in a more 'normal' linguistic mode, in th development of a language in social and historical experience. "Th unconscious' is the most evident example; 'id', 'ego', 'the mirror-phase 'repression' and 'reinforcement' are others. Materialist analysis + 'normal' linguistic concepts, taken from general political and cultur discourse, is necessarily historical; its linguistic procedures are the directly scientific. But in this special class of concepts, with a very limite or specialized history, with general currency yet with this inheres reference to 'evidence' of a technical kind lying well beyond them, the methodological difficulties are acute. There is also the problem of the other class of concepts, including most notably 'memory', 'sex' at 'repression', which have both a substantive general history, precedit their specialized applications, and highly specialized and derive meanings within particular intellectual systems. Analysis of these varying classes of concepts is fundamentally necessary, as a new form of historic and cultural linguistics. It cannot be said that Timpanaro establishes ne procedures; but so very little work of this kind is being done, anywherthat some of his ways of approaching the problem—and notably. 'memory'—are extraordinarily interesting.

Second, and more generally, it is a fact about classical Marxism that neglected, to its great cost, not only the basic human physical condition which Timpanaro emphasizes in his reconsideration of materialism, halso the emotional conditions and situations which make up so large part of all direct human relationship and practice. Problems of sexual including problematic sexuality, are among the most proming omissions; and it is within this area that the attempts to suppleme deepen, go beyond historical materialism have inevitably occurred. T is sometimes even described as turning from 'materialism' to 'hum considerations', with some but insufficient warrant in the more biza 'materialist' physio-chemical reductions of personal and relation experiences. But what is also increasingly claimed is that psychoanaly or certain variants of it, are themselves 'materialist'; the description appears sometimes serious, sometimes as a kind of loyalist affiliation.

Two things then need to be said. First, that it is wholly unreasonable to on claiming as 'materialist' (and therefore as complementing compatible with Marxism) systems of psychological explanati uncritically assimilated, at the level of 'findings', while ignoring dismissing as mere 'positivism' or 'empiricism' the large body experimental psychology concerned, for example, with problems perception, memory, dreaming and language-development. There undoubted theoretical problems arising from this work, but the grast

resolving them. Then, second, there is need for many more examples of the kind of rigorous theoretical and historical critique of psychological theory as mixed 'science' and 'ideology', which Timpanaro exemplifies in his analysis of the 'smothered materialism' of Freud and more briefly of Lacan and of other successors. It seems improbable that this can be done without confronting more directly, in historical-materialist terms, the much larger body of non-psychoanalytic psychological evidence and theory, and thereby (for this has been the cultural effect though hardly the scientific achievement of psychoanalytic revisionism) re-examining the received formulations of historical materialism itself, as at once historically limited and insufficiently materialist.

Language and Science

In his writings on nature and on psychoanalysis, Timpanaro is either deploying general arguments or using certain specialized skills to reexamine types of formulation, interpretation and analysis. In his essay on 'Structuralism and its Successors' he is, as a philologist, on more centrally familiar ground; and the brilliance of detail, both analytic and historical, is at once remarkable. There are those, at the level of general discourse, who tacitly assume that linguistics began with Saussure as psychology began with Freud. Timpanaro's masterly summary of the crisis in historical linguistics which preceded Saussure gives a depth to his subsequent critique, which in other respects and especially in certain passages is, though powerful, not entirely original. The critique is then at its best when he is fully engaged professionally, as in the case of Saussure or of Hjelmslev, though the discussions of Lévi-Strauss, Althusser, Barthes and others may have more political effect. The polemic against structuralism, in the sense of its extensions beyond linguistics, as an 'objective idealism', is vigorous and convincing, and there is a shrewd observation that some of the most influential forms of post-structuralism have been reactions not against its idealism but against its objectivity. The fact remains, however, that a good deal of this section is in effect categorical argument against abusers of categories, and it is above all in an account of language that we look for more than this; look indeed for the outlines of a productive materialism.

It is in Timpanaro's discussion of Chomsky that some of these can be discerned. Recognizing the value of Chomsky's emphasis on the 'creative side of linguistic activity', as against the mechanistic and merely reproductive positions of nineteenth-century biological linguistics and of orthodox structuralism, he at the same time correctly identifies a reversion, at the level of the most general principles, to what are clearly metaphysical forms of 'innatism'. Timpanaro's exceptionally wide knowledge of the history of linguistic studies is especially useful at this point. But it is in moving beyond the history of ideas to hypotheses adequate to contemporary scientific investigation that all the real problems begin. One significant theoretical distinction clears some ground: an important emphasis on the character of much scientific discovery, especially in studies of language, as the formulation of tendences rather than the revelation of language, This bears with close relevance on the tone and vocabulary of much structuralist and post-structuralist

also on other kinds of Marxism, in which the (political) language of a providential universe, complete with its 'law-maker', has evidently infected even historical materialism.

But then, more specifically, in a challenge to Chomsky's rejection of 'evolutionism', Timpanaro reasserts the importance of neurophysiological studies of language and of other communicative processes. This reminds us of the gap which has arisen everywhere, but with most damaging effect in Marxist work in the human sciences, betweer primarily philosophical and primarily natural-scientific traditions and formations. What could still be seen, within the external difficulties or Soviet linguistics, as a unity or at least a mode of contact in Vygotsky and his successors, has in the West become an almost incomprehensible split The physical investigation of sense-data, of stimuli from the natural and social environment, of language and non-verbal communicative development, continues to produce an enormous body of work; but it ha seemed possible, behind the defensive screens of the categories o 'positivism' and 'empiricism', to carry on the most fundaments arguments, involving quite universal definitions of the nature of 'man, and of 'reality', without much reference or with only carefully selectiv reference to it.

So striking a deformation of a whole intellectual enterprise must, for Marxist, have deep roots in a social order and in its cultural formations yet I am not sure that Timpanaro is right in looking only to a 'new socic political situation' to 'release' us from it. His work, more than any other draws attention to the split and the consequent deformation. It is markedly more useful than, for example, Snow's reasonable but limite description of the 'two cultures', since it is not only the relations between the literary-philosophical and the natural-scientific cultures that need to be questioned, but the complex relations of both to the socio-historic culture and process: relations, moreover, which cannot be reduced to the terms of a base-superstructure formula. The real lesson is a challenge to begin building intellectual formations of a new kind, and for man reasons the field of language and of non-verbal communication seems to be a good and practicable place to start.

The Materialist Project

Meanwhile, and for a start, how is Materialism? How is our broth-Historical, and those quarrelling great-uncles, Dialectical ar Mechanical? We do not mention Vulgar. In any materialist study language, these sceptical questions have to be asked—as once, and wis shock, about the significations of God. We have to inquir demonstrably, into these linguistic formations and bearings: elements a material practice within a continuing social process.

We may quickly come to know where we are with historical materialist. There is a demonstrable body of theory and practice, of method at evidence, within but also beyond the persuasive verbal formulatio. Indeed it is tempting, so much is this so, to limit Marxism to it substantial work, in which our central political and economic strugg?

It soon becomes clear that we cannot impose such a limit, and not only because of the pride, the received pride, of a limitless challenge. Too much social and cultural practice is necessarily directed beyond human history, to material that at once precedes it and persists. To neglect or withdraw from these directions would be a major cultural defeat. For the enemies are various and powerful: from the spiritualisms that are flourishing within a disintegrating social order, through the mythologizing, often sophisticated, of so many of our least understood conditions and practices, to the vaulting ambition of epistemology to become the universal science. The reiteration of concepts and of universalizing systems is then almost beside the point.

For the special character of materialism, and that which alone gives it value, is its rigorous openness to physical evidence. The point is put interestingly in question in a remark of Chomsky's: We can, however, be fairly sure that there will be a physical explanation for the phenomena in question, if they can be explained at all, for an uninteresting terminological reason, namely that the concept of "physical explanation" will no doubt be extended to incorporate whatever is discovered in this domain, exactly as it was extended to accommodate gravitational and electromagnetic force, massless particles, and numerous other entities and processes that would have offended the common sense of earlier generations.'5 This remark upsets and even outrages Timpanaro.6 He takes it as implying that science has not extended its real understanding but has merely incorporated new phenomena by a series of verbal tricks. But it is not science that is in question; it is the concept of the 'physical', or, if you will, the 'material'. And the answer to Chomsky, who is indeed trying to discourage inquiry into his own basic version of the 'innate', is that what is in question is not an 'uninteresting terminological' process, but the necessary social process through which the materialist enterprise defines and redefines its procedures, its findings and its concepts, and in the course of this moves beyond one after another 'materialism'. There are only two real barriers to this continuing process: one, against which Timpanaro has sufficiently warned us, of mythologizing or recuperating to received presumptions all that which we do not yet understand or understand imperfectly; the other, closer to home, of seeming to know in advance, and as a test of our political fidelity, the changing materialist content of materialism.

On Materialism, pp. 202 ff

Noam Chomsky, Language and Mind, New York 1972, p. 97.

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What Must Change in the Party

defeat of the Union of the Left has seriously confused the popular masses and ed many Communists with profound disquiet.* A 'workerist'—or more ecisely sectarian—faction is openly rejoicing at the break with the Socialist rty, presenting it as a victory over the social-democratic danger. But the ejority of militants are alarmed, not only at the grave setback itself, but above all the condition in which this strange defeat took place. Moreover, something wis happening. While they wait for an explanation from the Party leadership, the litants are themselves beginning to analyse the process that led to the defeat: enely, the line actually followed by the Party, with all its somersaults, and the garies of its practice. What they seek from the leadership is an assurance that it Il respect the material conditions without which the analysis cannot be pursued its conclusions discussed. In particular, they are demanding an open forum in party press and genuinely democratic preparation of the Twenty-Third ngress.

:ed with this movement, the party leadership is progressively establishing a all system of defence: at once dictating the conclusions in advance, and

Political Bureau declared: 'It will of course be necessary to draw all the lessons of the battle that has just been waged.' They speak in the future tense, as befits the opening of an investigation; but they do so only in order to provide advance-conclusions. First conclusion: 'The Communist Party bears no responsibility for this situation.' Apart from anything else this formula has the advantage of sheltering the leadership, which took all the decisions, behind the Party, which suffered all the consequences. Second conclusion: 'The guiding line [of the Party] has remained consistent during the last six years.' Thus, in his report of 29 March, Fiterman coulc emphasize the Party's heroism in conducting a battle, under difficult conditions, that was lost through the fault of the socialists: 'We did no want a defeat . . . We must reflect upon it, discuss it, and draw all the necessary lessons. But it is clear that, given the basic facts which I have just recalled, there was no other serious and responsible orientation that the one we took. Of that the Political Bureau is very firmly convinced.'

Thank you for the very firm conviction. The Political Bureau must be very 'firmly convinced' indeed, if it can dispense with any proof, offering us 'conclusions without a premiss' and a judgement without an analysis. This reveals in its true light the call launched by the Political Bureau: the analysis has to be made . . . only on the basis of the leadership' 'conclusions without a premiss'. And when Georges Marchais calls for analysis on the grounds that the situation requires 'discussion and reflection' (I Humanité, 4 April), he indicates that 'party units dispose of important material . . . with which to develop this examination'. When material? 'In particular, the Political Bureau statement of 20 March, and the report which Charles Fiterman presented to regional secretaries of behalf of the Political Bureau.' The circle is completed, then, the groun is staked out. On the basis of such rich material, the discussion caproceed in all freedom—that is, it can lock itself up in the conclusion presented beforehand.

Communists know what is really meant by Georges Marchais's appea 'We must discuss, that is quite right.' Discussion in partitioned cells, at the most a branch conference, but no more. And so, there will not be generalized, free exchange of analyses and experiences among military from different sectors, or between manual and intellectual workers—the kind of discussion which strengthens and sharpens. You will discusfreely, but on the basis of the conclusions contained in 'important documents' and exclusively in the framework of your basic organization (cells, branches).

Such is the official response to a rising Party-wide demand for ope forums in the Party press to make possible such exchange at comparison. The leadership has already said no: out of the question, not for

^{*}The text that follows was published in four parts in Ls Monde, on 24, 25, 26 and 27 AI 1978. Publication was timed to coincide with the first Central Committee meeting after elections (first round 12 March, second round 19 March), which was held on 26, 27 and April A slightly revised version of Althusser's text has since been published by Frans Maspéro in book form, with a foreword commenting on Marchais's report to the April meeting. All footnotes to the English translation have been added by NLR.

clause in the statutes, according to which open forums are only organized in order to prepare a congress. But, in reality, no such clause exists. There is not a single reference to discussion forums in the statutes. It would be hard enough, in the present circumstances, to accept that a workers' leader should invoke 'the law' against Party militants. But Marchais does more than that: he makes it up!

It is necessary to know of this outright refusal in order to understand why Communists are writing articles in Le Monde and elsewhere: for the Party daily and weeklies have been closed to them, by order of the leadership. More than anything, the leadership fears an exchange of experience and analysis among militants at the base. More than ever, it is in favour of partitioning—the number one technique for stifling rank-and-file reaction, through a three-tier system of delegation (cell—branch, branch—region, region—Central Committee).

As for that 'broad discussion' which will follow Marchais's own appeal, we can turn to Paul Laurent for a clarification of its real meaning: 'Evidently, the setback of 19 March calls for deep reflection in order to decide on the course to be pursued in the new stage opening before us.' One thing is quite certain and evident: on the basis of the Political Bureau's 'very firm conviction', the analysis will very quickly be 'called upon' to leave behind examination of the past and concentrate entirely on the future, on 'the path of fresh advances' (Political Bureau statement, 4 April). This is an old leadership practice, kept in perfect working order: an appeal to the tasks ahead very quickly serves to bury the past, together with its contradictions, mistakes and enigmas. As for those who dwell on past errors, they of course will turn aside 'from life', and so 'from the struggle', and so 'from the line', won't they comrades?

Strategy: the Disguised Turn

The more the future opens up, the more the past closes on itself. Already it is no longer a question of the cr, but only of the sp: "The disastrous, suicidal strategy of the sp and that alone is the direct cause of the fact that the Left did not achieve victory." While the militants reflect, the leadership slams down its conclusions: the cr's lack of responsibility for the outcome logically passes into the sp's total responsibility. Thus hemmed in between a sweeping judgement on the past and 'tasks for the future', reflection and discussion on the role of the Party can be in no doubt of their destiny. They will be left a few 'blemishes', but the line will be proclaimed to have been 'consistent' and 'correct'. The mechanism of structuring and stifling discussion is in place and fully operative.

However, between the leadership's concept of 'reflection' and the Party militants' method of reflecting, there is a 'slight contradiction' that will not easily be removed. The militants do not agree to discussing on the basis of the 'important documents' mentioned by Marchais (Political Bureau statements; Fiterman Report). They do not wish to begin thinking with a conclusion that assigns responsibility or non-responsibility to a particular party, or with the argument that if the CP is responsible for nothing, then the SP is responsible for everything. They are fed up with that kind of Manichean thinking—one, moreover, which is both

They know that the Union of the Left is a necessity, and that the curren represented by the SP must be won to it. But they have never had an illusions about the SP or about the composite nature of its militants (old SPIO cadres; the nucleus organized by CERES; and many members with no real political formation). They see its function as an electoralist bloc, a the mercy of struggles for influence arbitrated by an authoritarial 'historic leader', who orients the Party according to his personal fancy—which is far from hostile to the social-democratic International or to modern forms of class collaboration—and has declared his cards well in advance: to take three million votes from the CP.

However, Communist militants do not understand the 'logic' according to which the sp's overwhelming responsibility is supposed to exhaust th matter. Why should it not, on the contrary, also pose the question of the CP responsibility? After all, the policy of the CP was very closely bound u with that of the Socialist Party; and it is really to confuse dialectics wit paranoia to think of responsibility as a question of all or nothing. Beside such a method rebounds on those who use it. For how is it that the Communis Party, after it had been enlightened by Mitterand's Vienna declaratio (the three million CP votes to be 'taken') and by Marchais's secret repor of June 1972, 1 still opened that enormous political credit for the SP which gave it so much strength; made of Mitterand the United Left candidate; the 1974 presidential elections; and put the SP in a position where it coul dominate the Left? In its 4 April statement, the Political Bureau spoke (the sp strategy as having been exposed by recent events: it spoke of 'wha has been its real strategy ever since the 1972 Common Programme'. Bu in those five years 'since the Common Programme', who else if not the c leadership provided the SP with the means needed for its strategy—befor deciding to combat 1t?

In reality, the militants reflect in a different way: as materialists seeking t reach a dialectical judgment on the basis of evidence—not in the mode (all-or-nothing but in that of contradiction. They start at the beginning, t analysing their own experience as women and men well placed to hear th workers' reactions and reflections, and to gauge the effect produced c them by the somersaults in the Party line, by Marchais's style i intervention, and by the (often unexpected) election results. With regain to these 'important documents' (this time genuinely important), they to to reflect as Marxists—in other words, as women and men who are box capable of 'thinking for themselves' (Marx) and careful to think throug what they have experienced and observed, as a function of the charact and contradictions of class relations. They have had enough pragmatism and empiricism. They want to understand why the Par could attain none of the objectives which the leadership set five years ag And they know that, in order to understand, it is necessary to go beyon the simple 'facts' (so dear to Fiterman) and to grasp what Lenin calle their 'inner connection', in our class society, this always involv economic, political and ideological class relations of extreme complexi

¹ Marchaus's June 1972 report was only made public three years later, by Political Bure member Étienne Fajon in *La Monda* 9 July 1975.

analysis is coming spontaneously from the base could really mark an epoch in the political history of the French Party.

However, there is a very high chance that the leadership will use the might of its apparatus to break this 'slight contradiction'—the contradiction between a concept of 'reflection' structured and controlled from above, and the real practice of 'reflection' resting on concrete analysis of the material contradictions experienced by the Party base. But the militants know the leadership's polished expertise in smothering disagreements, its technique of 'recuperation', and its skill in putting off 'until later' (until the Twenty-Third Congress) the vaguely promised reforms that are so badly needed. So the leadership can be assured that many will follow with the greatest vigilance and interest all the methods—including the most 'liberal' in appearance—which it will introduce in order to resolve this 'slight contradiction': that is, in order to crush the grain of sand that could jam its gigantic machine.

Hidden Motives

One of the oldest maxims of political practice (Machiavelli, even Napoleon!) states that it is never advisable to treat people as imbeciles. In common with the French people, most Communist militants were not really 'taken in'-either by the endless debate on nationalization figures, or by the solemn and short-lived comedy of election percentages (25 per cent would be good, but 21 per cent is not enough!), or by the blustering about 'Communist ministers' or other such productions Most militants, and not only they, know the truth of what Marx said about the 18th Brumaire: namely, that history is a theatre and that, in order to understand it, we have to look behind the masks and speeches of leaders. and above all behind the stage itself; we have to seek the political stakes of the class struggle, as well as its causes and effects. Isolated as it was in its positions of power, the leadership did not wish to sense this unease. But the militants clearly sensed that, behind the 'consistent' invoking of the Union of the Left, behind the divergences and the split, and behind the farcical agreement of 13 March when the Party abandoned all its previous positions, something serious and strange was going on—something that remains a secret.

At the heart of all the questions raised lies a certain conviction and a certain interrogation. The conviction: party strategy was not always 'consistent'; it was changed for a time at the Twenty-First Congress, then returned to its previous course from the Twenty-Second Congress until shortly after the Nantes sp Congress (June 1977), when it was precipitated into the line that was to bring about the September break with the sp and the defeat of the Union of the Left. The interrogation: why, then, has the leadership never accounted for its change in strategy? What did it have to hide? This is indeed the question of questions: what was the leadership biding, when it kept quiet about the change of strategy which it was imposing on the Party?

At this point 'hypotheses' appear in swarms. To be brief, I shall only consider the most likely one, which goes as follows. The leadership

from nothing through its signature of the Common Programme. For this party might threaten the very core of the CP's own electorate, or even one day follow the 'social-democratic' tradition by supporting a Giscard majority. In trying to reduce the sp's audience, the leadership therefore wanted to strengthen the Party against the dangers of the future (the crisis, the Chirac threat, and so on). Why keep silent about this strategic turn? In order to bide the contradiction between the line of the most recent period—struggle against the sp—and the line followed during the previous five years: close collaboration with the sp, from the joint Mitterand candidacy of 1972 through the 1976 cantonal elections to the municipals of 1977.

The fact is, however, that this strategic turn led only to defeat. Quite simply, the Left needed the 'centrist' and petty-bourgeois votes which given the Party's abandonment of these layers, could only be won by the sp. The wish for a Left victory was therefore impossible to square with refusal to provide the necessary means. And, as if to add farce to drama the Party leadership recognized in practice that such 'means' were necessary, b' ceding everything to the sp the day after the first round. It needed : transfer of sp votes in order to win its full number of deputies—and that was the end of the matter. On 13 March, at the very moment when the 'good agreement' was eventually signed (the front page of l'Humanité hac the banner headline 'It's done!'), many Party militants who has previously been reluctant to believe it suddenly realized that the 'differences' put forward in September might have been mere pretexts fo the real motives of the SP and CP leaderships. Thus, in the class battle tha opposed an utterly reactionary and discredited Right to the will of ever category of workers, everything was settled within the Left rather than i struggle against the Right; and the CP leadership saw as the number one objectiv strengthening the Party against the Socialist menace.

The unity euphoria of 1972 had first been shaken at the Twenty-Fire Congress, which followed a number of by-election results suggesting danger to the CP. But under the impact of the Twenty-Second Congress the previous atmosphere was re-established until the public 'right turn effected by the SP at its Nantes Congress of June 1977. The CP leadershi responded with a secret strategic turn, giving no explanation of the chang but, on the contrary, disguising it beneath the continuity of a singl language. To continue speaking the language of the old strategy whil practising a new one was to refuse to recognize that a strategic turn ha been made. The dual language created unbelievable confusion among th militants: they literally did not understand any more what was going on, an they were quite incapable of explaining it to those around them. After th public 'right turn' on the Nantes Congress, the CP leadership does sees basically to have opted for strengthening the Party at any price—that 1 for weakening the SP at any price, even if it involved sacrificing the Unic of the Left. Although the Left lost, the Party leadership won. But it wo only insofar as the SP failed to achieve its targets: everything else, including th victory of the Left, was sacrificed to the CP's 'victory' over the sp.

This basic option was kept secret. It is pleasant to imagine a different kir of leadership—one which, possessing sufficient courage, lucidity ar sensitivity to our people's intelligence, would have used a frank and ope

reasons for its 'turn'. Indeed, it was perfectly possible for the leadership to do this: and it would thereby have won out against both attacks from the Right and the hesitations of the sp. Undoubtedly the outcome would also have been different. Why then was the basic option kept secret, resulting as it did in an incomprehensible double language? Doubtless because and change in line naturally involves critical examination of the old line, and thus points to errors in orientation. And once the book of errors is opened, the end is by no means as clear as the beginning. The new line might also be incorrect, just as it was not known at the time that the old one was wrong; one error may always secrete another.

'The Party is Always Right'

There is no doubt that the old leadership reflex has come out on top: 'the Party (=the leadership) is always right'; 'everything that has happened verifies our line'; 'our line is correct'; 'the Party has followed a consistent line'. It is always a sign of weakness when people dare not face the reality that is called a change of strategy: they prefer denial ('we have not changed our line') to the attempt to understand what is going on. After all, it was Georges Marchais who said on television: 'I shall make a self-criticism . . . We should have published my secret report when it was delivered. Not to have done so was right opportunism.'

Any reader will conclude that such opportunism dominated the leadership line between 1972 and 1975—the date when the secret report was published by Fajon during the first outbreak of polemics with the Socialists... So there must have been a first strategy, then a turn, and then a second strategy. It is that strategic turn which was camouflaged from the militants by a single discourse. In fact, there were two modes of speech: one of the old strategy and one of the new. But they intermingled and overlapped beneath the fiction of a single discourse as 'consistent' as Party strategy itself. Just try to cope with the riddles of such double-talk when it falls from above and you are underneath!

At any event, we are now talking of political errors and of the way to handle them. One method of handling errors (or rather suppressing them in authoritarian fashion) is to act according to the principle: 'The Party is always right, its line is always correct.' This has the advantage of radically suppressing the question of error, but the drawback of leaving a certain residue: namely, those militants who will not give up speaking of the mistake. They are obviously in error (another!), and yet they persist. In the old days, they used to be driven from the Party. Now the leadership gets out of trouble by stating: 'It's always the same ones!' Thus, Georges Marchais says that they were already opposed to the Twenty-Second Congress—clearly an aggravating circumstance, even though it is a complete falsehood. The key thing is to brand them as 'habitual offenders' and to keep a good eye on them. It is enough that they be given the defamatory title of 'desk-bound intellectuals' or doctrinaire minds. With the help of a dose of workerism, the Party apparatus will close once more around them—and the trick will be done.

However, Lenin showed another way of handling political error: Not to

method of handling errors, they are alarm-signals coming from practice. They always point to a lacuna or failure, either in the structure of thought or in the structure of organization. They may be benign or serious. They are serious when grave contradictions have not been faced, but continue on their muffled path, disturbing political practice. Despite what our leadership does, an error is not just something that is admitted from above as a last resort ('We are not perfect; blemishes may always appear'), in order to hurry on to the business of the day. According to the Marxist conception, the really important thing is what the mistaks conceals: namely, the structural contradictions of which it is but the manifestation. As a precise 'event', an error eventually passes by: but unless the causes are tackled and reduced, they will always persist.

It is to this persistence that Lenin was referring when he said that failure to analyse a mistake is more serious than having committed it. For in the strong sense of the term, to recognize and analyse an error involves going beyond the phenomenon itself to seek out and overcome its causes. For every Marxist militant, these causes are rooted in a defective understanding of class relations, of the effects of class relations, or even of phenomena that appear on the fringes of class relations (the troublesome youth question, women, ecology, and so on). The requirement that error be handled according to this Marxist method is pre-eminently of concerr to Communists. They know that unless they master the underlying cause of error (whether in the international Communist movement or in the line and functioning of their Party), such errors will persist: that is to say, they will manifest themselves without end, in one form or another. No, it is not 'always the same ones' who criticize errors; but left uncriticized, the same causes do always produce and reproduce the same errors.

It is necessary to affirm this Marxist requirement, because the leadership has already made its preparations. It will speak of errors and even givesome examples on its own initiative to Party militants—as a token of it spirit of independence. But these will always be tactical and localized errors, never affecting the correctness of the line. Those militants who are forewarded will certainly follow with interest this method of verbaconcession, in which words are exchanged for hot air.

Organization: a Machine for Dominating

That they should understand the political line, and that they shoul understand how the Party functions: these are the twin demands bein formulated by numerous militants—not only by intellectuals, but just a strongly by worker-militants in the big factories. We can safely assum that the militants were not privy to the secrets of the gods. This goes bac a long way. For the 1972 agreement was negotiated and signed 'at the top'; and the Union of the Left, far from being a policy of popular unit remained throughout simply one of unity between political formation controlled each by its respective leadership. After the Twenty-Secon Congress, moreover, once things became serious, militants began to have the impression that the Congress was being put in cold storage: that all i promises of democracy and freedom were being sacrificed to the leadership's pragmatism and authoritarianism. And during the last fe

If at least there had been some coherence and clarity in messages from the Political Bureau or Central Committee and in Marchais's televised exhortations! But no: they ceaselessly promised a Left victory, ever though the slogans altered or became quite incomprehensible. For example, what on earth could have been the meaning of that pathetic and derisory cry—'Help us!'—which was bannered right across the from page of l'Humanité on 23 September? What to make of a cry for help wher we know not to whom it is addressed, who is in distress, and exactly what has happened to that somebody? Maybe the leadership thought it was launching a 'mobilizing' call; but at the base, people looked at one another in silence.

Unexplained Turns

As for the key slogans, they fell from on high one after the other: the hour of the great parachute-drops had come. But when the militants opened the containers, they could not believe their eyes or their memories: they were quite simply being asked to abandon objectives with which they had been led into battle for years, and to replace them by their diametrical opposites! Thus, falling from the skies came the news of the dizzying about-face on the nuclear strike-force; the reversal of policy on Europe; the reduction of the wage-spread to a scale from one to five; and the introduction into Party doctrine of the 'despicable' notion of self-management.

From one day to the next, without being either consulted or forewarned, militants who had been in combat for years found themselves being surprised from the rear by their own leadership! If the leadership thought it could get away with this by revealing that 'specialists' (i.e. high-ranking officers) had been 'working' on the nuclear strike-force 'for two years'. this is only because it has not the slightest inkling of the militants' view of 'specialists' whose exploits in the division of labour and the field of exploitation are already directly known to them. The rank and file were faced with ready-made decisions: made by sovereign decree. These questions which preoccupied party militants could have been debated at the Twenty-Second Congress. But no, they were dealt with from on high, by the grace of the State, in an authoritarian manner, without consulting the base, outside the congress. Being of a generous and trusting nature, the militants can forget a lot of things. But when they are treated like pawns, only to be led to defeat in a battle to which they have devoted body and soul—well, then they want to know what is going on.

After all, it is they who had to bear the burden of the campaign: its 180-degree turns, the mysteries of the line, its somersaults and fits and starts. It is they who, working in the factories, neighbourhoods and villages, had to explain incomprehensible decisions that often turned upside down everything that was previously certain. Not only were they placed in the quite impossible situation of having to defend the nuclear strike force, the EEC, the 1–3 wage-spread, etc.; they were thrown into further traps when (again from above) a campaign 'for the poor' was launched, to the

working class (and this goes even for the three million immigrants and other workers paid the official minimum) does not spontaneously recognize its state as 'poverty'—a notion coming from the nineteenth century or earlier, with its overtones of philanthropy and relief. One of the conquests of the workers' movement has precisely been to bring workers to think of themselves not as 'the poor' but as exploited productive workers.

Has the leadership ever anticipated the question: Who are the rich? How great an income or how much wealth must a person have to be rich? These are important questions, especially since it has been stated in the past (e.g. at the Twenty-Second Congress) that all but $6\infty,\infty$ of the French population, rich and poor, are victims of the monopolies. How could you expect the militants to find their bearings in this improvised scenario, which suddenly brought the poor into the foreground without defining the rich? It scared the middle wage-earners for no purpose, without the most underprivileged wage-earners really feeling concerned by this spectacular initiative. And to add to the confusion of Party militants, what were they to make of the celebrated formula: '25 per cent would be good, but 21 per cent is not enough'. What was that supposed to be? A slogan: for whomia A prophecy? A veiled form of blackmail? Or just a day-dream? No one could make head or tail of it.

It is the militants who dealt directly with the working people, and who really 'felt their pulse': not on the stage, at the kind of giant rally when Georges Marchais can be sure in advance of the impact he will have, but a work, in everyday life, seeing their problems, difficulties, hopes and anxieties. It is the militants who can testify to the deep and moving trus which the workers placed, not so much in the over-long, excessively technical and astonishingly cold Common Programme, as in the existence of the Union of the Left. This trust had deep roots in a historical memor which encompasses not only the fraternity of the Popular Front, but all the crushed working-class revolutions in the history of France, going right back to 1848 and to the Pans Commune; the great historical struggles that followed the First World War; and the immense social hopes that accompanied the Resistance.

This time, after a century and a half of defeats and painful advance bringing no genuine liberation, the hope was there and victory was at las assured, at arm's reach. Is it really understood what this means: the possibility or near-certainty that, for the first time in history, an age-old tradition would be broken and victory secured? Tenaciously and stubbornly, rooted is the revolt against exploitation and daily oppression, this confidence is unity as the pledge of victory was maintained despite the breakdown of the Union. It is hard to grasp the magnitude of the historical intelligence and political maturity underlying this confidence, which had to surmout the workers' stupor at the brutal character of the break, even though no one seems to have worried about the demobilizing and demoralizing effect which the latter could not ultimately fail to provoke.

It was these same militants who were able to observe that, however wel founded it may have been, the campaign against the SP did not go dow

offended and discouraged all people or good will. They could have testified that, once the Party's first wind was exhausted, cell meetings were becoming smaller and smaller and the Party's activity going into decline. In the end, its policy came to focus entirely on a massive recruitment drive and on Georges Marchais's television 'spectaculars'. (The whole of France watched these, admiring his talent; but the bourgeois State, which is shrewder than many people think, knew what it was doing when it gave Marchais priority on national and regional channels.)

Who will believe that all these are just details? It is obvious that there are close links between on the one hand Georges Marchais's TV monopoly, the parachuted slogans that completely reversed the Party's fighting positions, the settling of issues by leadership 'specialists' or advisers rather than by the militants or a congress, the authoritarian treatment and indeed manipulation of Party members, and on the other hand the secrecy that still surrounds the nature and motivation of the change of strategy.

The Tradition of Secrecy

The leadership found itself obliged to reveal two of its secrets: Georges Marchais's report to the June 1972 Central Committee following the signature of the Common Programme, and the range of possible concessions to be made to the SP after 22 September (disclosed in the Fiterman report). It resigned itself to making these known, because it needed to give a semblance of continuity to its positions and to prove that it had not changed its strategy. But it only let out what it wished: everything else still remains secret. It can safely be wagered that unless the militants intervene to alter these practices, the leadership will keep silent on the essential questions. Of course, it will give the well-known traditional explanations for the election results: we will get studies of political patterns, demography, population shifts, electoral sociology, and skilful balancing of gains and losses. But will it go beyond superficial analysis of election results to the heart of the matter: namely, political analysis of its change in line and of its disguisement of that change? As the leadership is today, that is virtually unthinkable.

Silence on the key questions is unfortunately an organic part of the leadership's habits, which are rooted in the whole Stalinist tradition surviving within the Party apparatus. Despite the inadequacies and contradictions of the Twenty-Second Congress, it did arouse the great hope that an end would be made to this autocratic tradition. But things had to be toned down. Freedom of discussion at the base had already been achieved before the Twenty-Second Congress, which did nothing to change the leadership's practices. The apparatus had already made the discovery—as old as the bourgeois world itself—that it could offer itself the luxury of allowing the militants to discuss freely in their cells without being punished or expelled, since in any case such discussion had no practical consequences: It gives them so much pleasure and costs us so

^{2 2} September 1977 was the date of the open rupture between the partners in the Union of the Left.

Chamtort's works. In tact, the secret discussions and decisions of real import always take place above regional level, in the Political Bureau and Secretariat; or rather, in a small group not recognized by the statutes that comprises the Secretariat, a part of the Political Bureau, and some Central Committee 'experts' or collaborators. That is where the real decisions are made. Afterwards, the Political Bureau makes them known and the Central Committee ratifies them to a man, because it is—or thinks it is—in the confidence, or at least the proximity, of truth and power.

Many militants say that 'things can't go on like this', and that it is necessary to denounce and change from top to bottom the way in which the 'machine' that is the Party actually functions. They say this not only for themselves and their freedom as militants (that is, for the Party, which is its militants), but for the mass of the workers of France, who cannot be victorious in the class struggle without the CP, but who cannot win with this Communist Party as it is today. These same militants do not want the Party to be 'a party like the rest'. They know all too well what 'the rest' are like—those oligarchic bourgeois parties in which complete domination is exercised by a caste of professionals, experts and intellectuals clearly linked to the higher state, administration. These militants think that what is needed is a revolutionary party basing itself on the class struggle of the exploited. They think that such a party needs a leadership and responsible officials. They think that democratic centralism can and should be preserved, on condition that deep changes are made to its rules and still more to its practice—not only to constitutional rights, but to that which decides the fate of every right, namely, the political life and practice of the Party.

We should beware of a certain temptation now that we have come to the heart of the matter: the Party. In order to understand the way in which the Party functions, we are here obliged to uncover the mechanism for itself, and thus to abstract from the Party's peculiar place in the history of the class struggles of the people of France and in that of the international Communist movement. In fact, the mechanism that we shall now outline rests upon a specific bistory: the history of the forms of bourgeois and working-class struggle peculiar to France. It is this which has made the Party what it is today, marking it with characteristic features and assigning it a clearly defined place in French society. Bearing these points in mind, then, we must answer the question: what is the Party?

The Model of the Bourgeois State

I have used the word 'machine' on purpose, because it is the term by which Marx and Lenin referred to the State. Indeed, everyone car observe an astonishing fact: although the Party is evidently not a State if the true sense, it is exactly as if its structure and mode of functioning were closely modelled at once on the bourgeois State apparatus and military apparatus.

Here we come to the parliamentary aspect of the Party. At one extreme lie the mass of militants, who can discuss freely in their cells and branches. This is the 'sovereign people' . . . only its sovereignty stops dead at the level of the regional secretariats, run by full-timers. That is where the breal

I mis is where things start to become serious (rol the leadership). It the popular will of the base finds expression in elections, it is in the most reactionary forms (a three-round majority vote for congresses), and under the close watch of 'nominations committees' which, although recognized by the statutes for the election of 'officials', have been illegally extended to the election of congress delegates.

These elections produce the hierarchy of officials: members of branch committees and bureaux, the regional committee, the Central Committee and, at the top, the Political Bureau and its Secretariat. Elected by handpicked regional delegates, the Central Committee is supposed to be the sovereign Party body—its legislature and its executive. In reality, however, this sovereign body serves to ratify and put into practice leadership decisions, rather than to propose anything new. No one has ever heard of the Central Committee taking the slightest initiative. It is more the leadership's executive than its legislative body: it is a kind of general assembly of prefects whom the leadership sends all over France to 'follow' (i.e. keep close control of) the regions, to appoint regional secretaries, and to settle delicate matters. Moreover, the leadership bases itself not only on the members of the Central Committee, but also on the formidable, and often hidden, power of its diverse functionaries: those unknown full-timers and Central Committee advisers, never elected but recruited through co-optation on the basis of competence or clientelism, and specialists of every kind.

This then is the military aspect of the Party. But all that has just been said would be incomplete if we did not also mention the basic and absolute principle of vertical partitioning. Reminiscent of the forms of military hierarchy, this partitioning has a dual effect. On the one hand, it encloses every rank-and-file militant in a narrow column ascending from his cell through the branch to the regional and Central committees. This 'upward-moving traffic' is dominated by full-time officials, who carefully filter the rank-and-file contribution in the light of decisions made at the top. On the other hand, unless he is delegated to branch or regional conferences, the rank-and-filer has no contact with militants from other cells, each of which belongs to a different ascending column. Any attempt to establish a 'horizontal relationship' is still today held to be 'factional activity'.

One might really believe oneself to be in a military formation, whose operational efficiency involves not only strict obedience and secrecy, but rigid partitioning of combat units. There is nothing defamatory in this comparison. It recalls the period when the Party had to resort to military forms of organization and security in order to defend itself and conduct activity (Lenin's underground party, the clandestine character of the Party during the Resistance, and so on). But just as conditions then justified partitioning measures, so do present-day conditions render them defunct, anachronistic and sterilizing—not only for the militants but for the masses, and even for the leaders themselves.

In so combining the military model of partitioning with the model of parliamentary democracy, the Party cannot but reproduce and strengthen

forms of political domination reproduced by free 'citizens', so does the Party leadership have its forms of domination reproduced by the militants. From the military model it derives, among other things, the noinsignificant advantage of being able to disguise co-optation of officials: their election. The combination of the two allows reproduction not on of the leadership's political domination, but of the very leadership corps itsel. The narrow range of reproduction makes the leaders practical irremovable, however great their failures or, on occasion, their politic bankruptcy. (One thinks here of the line of 'legalization' at any pric operated in autumn 1940.) In such conditions, the 'play' of Part democracy leads, as it does in the bourgeois State, to the miracle of transubstantiation. The popular will changes into ruling-class power and in the same way, the will of the Party rank and file changes into the power of the leadership.

Has anyone given thought to the fact that there is another side to th reproduction mechanism, whereby the leadership stays fixed through a strategic and tactical reversals and errors? I am referring to th membership-drain: the constant haemorrhage of militants and the replacement by 'new generations' who have not experienced the battles (the previous five, ten or twenty years and who are, in turn, launched int the fray with 'theories', slogans or promises, only to be 'burned up' in few years? Why is the number of ex-Communists greater than the currer Party membership, even according to official figures? Why have so man existing members given up activity? Why is it that whole generations (militants, battle-tested in the Resistance, the Cold War, Vietnam, Algeria 1968 and so on, are now absent from the Party's activities or from positions of responsibility? The Party, that miniature 'state apparatus has found a solution to the famous problem mentioned by Brecht after th bloody roots in East Berlin: 'Has the people lost the trust of the leaders Another one will have to be elected—that's all!' From time to time through its periodic recruitment drives, the Party leadership 'elects' new 'people'—that is, another rank and file, other militants. But th leadership itself remains in place.

The Pact of Unanimity

In order to assert its legal claim to self-reproduction, the leadership recently dug up the imposing moral theme of collective leadership. This has allowed it, for several years now, to do without the periodic purges of ol (the 'affairs' involving Marty-Tillon, Lecoeur, Servin-Casanova, and s on). A Collective leadership is fondly represented as the antithesis of 'th personality cult'. But what is the truth of the matter? The theme of collective leadership actually covers over a pact among the leaders—pact which separates them as a body from the membership and helps to

³ In the autumn of 1940, after the Franco-German armistice concluded in June and the establishment of Marshal Pétain's quisling Vichy régime, the policy of the FCF was to see the legalization of its existence in Vichy France—hence to have no truck either with arm resistance to the Naxis or with De Gaulle's Free French movement launched in Octob 1940.

⁴ These occurred in 1952, 1954 and 1961 respectively

Political Bureau and Secretariat (or rather in the tiny leading group) will ever be made known to the militants unless that group so decides. In plain language, you can never detect any nuance of formulation distinguishing one leader from another—a situation for long unthinkable in Italy. Differences and disagreements are settled according to the law of absolute discretion: and it is understood beforehand that anyone 'in a minority' will carry out the policy of the others without betraying any reticence in public. (Georges Marchais has sometimes given the impression of speaking against his inner convictions.)

In this way, the end of all objective personal responsibility, the end of recognized contradictions, and the concerted silence of the leadership are presented as the pery perfection of leadership unity. Such vaunting of collective leadership is an avowal that Power and Truth are exclusively held by those few 'men in the shadows' whom television viewers could see creeping mockingly and silently behind Georges Marchais on the evening of the first round. Mockingly, because they know what was going to happen. Silently, because silence sets the seal on the collective leadership pact, and because you do not have to speak when you hold power and knowledge. Silence really is the barrier between men: between, on the one side, those who treat men with silence because they have the power and the knowledge; and on the other side, those who are left in silence so that they may acquire neither knowledge nor power. These 'men in the shadows' were so identified with their function that they did not even have the foreboding that the hallucinatory stage-production might not only frighten some people but offend the tact, dignity and sense of freedom of the workers. No one will dare believe that this 'scene', this 'scene-setting' was just an accident: it was a spectacular symptom that revealed the degree of insensibility and cynicism with which the leadership now manipulates its militants and the working people.

This machine for dominating, controlling and manipulating the Party militants is nowhere exhibited better than in the type of militant which it quite literally produces as its specific and indispensable effect. I am thinking of the life-long full-timer who, riveted to the Party by an iron law, has to show unconditional obedience in return for his daily bread. The fulltimer (who is often recruited straight from the Party youth or student organization) cannot give up this means of livelihood, because he has either never had a trade or has fallen out of practice. And most of the time, he does not even come into any real contact with the masses, since he is too busy controlling them. A fine consolation (and mystification), to write on one's voting slip: 'labourer', 'postman' or 'metalworker', when one has in fact exchanged the condition of worker twenty or thirty years ago for that of functionary-intellectual, with a greater or lesser degree of 'responsibility'! The situation is thus in most cases highly fraught. In the lower echelons, where the compensations of higher power do not exist, it can only be lived and borne by making at all costs a sublimated rationality out of the Party's irrationality—the full-timer being well placed to observe the latter phenomenon at close quarters. But he can do this only on condition that he keeps quiet or resigns himself to a position without hope. To be loyal and submissive, out of conformism or necessity, that

Ideology: a Caricature

Since we have talked in terms of a 'machine' and a State, we must als speak of ideology. For there has to be an ideology with which to 'cemeni (Gramsci) the unity of the Party.

On the one band, this ideology is based upon the militants' moving trust i their leaders, as those who embody the unity and will of the part inheriting the national and international revolutionary tradition. An behind that trust there generally lies a class bond, which finds expressio among the workers in the ending of isolation; in the warmth an fraternity of a common experience in struggle that is quite unlike the common experience of exploitation; in pride that the Party exists as conquest of working-class struggles; in the consciousness that it is led b workers like themselves; in the assurance provided by this class leadership, and so on. But there are also aberrant forms of this trust forms which abstract from all history and involve entirely uncritiq acceptance on the part of the militants, or even the expectation that th leadership will do their thinking for them. That kind of self-renunciatio produces the category of blind sectarians, who end up having only single reflex: to throw all their passion and devotion into serving th leadership and defending it on every point—'The Party (i.e. th leadership) is always right'. Such blindly trusting members are naturall suitable for all the thankless tasks, but also for all the responsibilities. Th leadership makes abundant use of them, rewarding them for the submissiveness and, in practice, encouraging the most narrow-minde conservatism.

On the other hand and conjointly, this trust is exploited by an ideology this skilfully formulated and modelled by the leadership and infunctionaries. This ideology has as its function to identify Party unit with the leadership and the line which it adopts. Contrary to what may be thought, there is nothing spontaneous in this. It is the ideology itself the conforms to and justifies Party policy.

We have now come to a crucial point in the explanation of what happening in the Party. In Marxist theory and tradition, neither Part unity nor the Party as such is an end in itself. The Party is the provision: organization of working-class struggle: it exists only to serve this classtruggle, and its unity is required only to serve action. That is why we cannot remain content with the idea that the ideology of the Party serve to 'cement' its unity: such a conception tells us nothing about the nature of the ideology or about the function of unity. If a party is withered an hardened, its unity may yet remain intact; but it will then be formal an unreal, and the party itself will be literally 'cemented' by a withered an hardened ideology. If, however, a party is alive, its unity will be contradictory; and the party will be united by a living ideology which while it is bound to be contradictory, is yet open and fertile. Now, what it that gives life to a party? Its living relationship to the masses: to the battles, discoveries and problems in a class struggle traversed by tw

towards the liberation of the exploited.

We can see at once that the question of Party ideology is a particularly complex problem. For it involves not only the confidence of the militants not only the (more or less formal) unity of the Party, but above all the entire relationship between Party and masses. This relationship assumes: dual form: the form of the Party's political practice, its style of leadership and activity in organizing and orienting the mass struggle; and the form of Party theory, which is indispensable if we are to reflect upon the experiences of political practice and situate them in the perspective of the contradictory tendencies of the class struggle. Party ideology is thus like a condensate of the Party's condition and unity, and of its relationship to the masses and to theory.

The Era of Official Platitudes

Do we still have to recall the lamentable state of Marxist theory in the French Party? It is not only that the Party has inherited the old French working-class tradition, which did not want to hear of theory. But after the mentorious theoretical efforts of Maurice Thorez in the pre-war period, the Party geared itself for years of Stalinist hard labour and even added its own contribution to the age of official platitudes. Marxist theory became an international State dogma or a kind of evolutionist positivism, while dialectical materialism became the 'science of sciences'. Marxist theory, which was barely alive within the Party, has never recovered from this voluntary servitude. And just as everything that is officially produced in the USSR merely serves to stifle Marxist theory, so in France all those who have been employed for twenty years in tinkering around with Soviet productions have helped to finish off what was left of Marxist theory. It is enough to read the programmes of Party schools: apart from a few original ideas, which are due to their authors' courage in thinking and investigating by themselves, Marxist theory has reached zero-point in the Party. It has disappeared.

There is no reason for us to think that the leadership is concerned about this. The world-wide crisis of Marxism leaves it as cold as did the world economic crisis during the years of the Common Programme. It is even indifferent to the form taken by the crisis in France: namely the disappearance of Marxist theory within the Communist Party. The abandonment of Marxist theory certainly denotes theoretical blindness and thus political blindness (for theory is highly political). We have just seen the truth of this in the few years leading up to 13 March. But do you think that the leadership will make the link?

The leadership will get over it easily enough. For the Party has its own 'theory': the so-called 'theory' of CME, which is simply the French version of the Soviet theory of state monopoly capitalism adorned with some Boccarian considerations on the over-accumulation/devalorization of capital. So great is its (theoretical) scope that it has appeared in print

⁵ Capitalisme monopoliste d'État

Paul Boccara is a Central Committee member and one of the editors of Economic at Politique.

that it was this discipline which Marx subjected to his 'critique'. It may be very little appreciated, or even openly disdained, by such large fraternal parties as the PCI. But never mind; at least it is our theory. The proof is that it was manufactured to the order of our leadership by our economic department 'attached to the Central Committee'—although, of course, the department was first purged of all those who did not agree. A theory made to order! Why not, after all? Many great musical works were commissioned in that way! What is more, not everything in the Manual is without interest. But as a whole, this colossal work was apologetic in character: it had to prove a conclusion which already existed in political form before its 'economic' demonstration. CME, then, was intended as a sort of theoretical warranty backing up the anti-monopoly policy of the Common Programme.

The two major conclusions of this work are fairly well known: 1. We have entered a new phase, the 'ante-chamber of socialism', in which monopolist concentration penetrates the State and forms together with it 'a single mechanism'; 2. France is dominated by 'a handful of monopolists' and their assistants. The political conclusions to be drawn from these propositions are clear: 1. The ante-chamber of socialism and the 'single mechanism' of monopolies/State change the question of the State; the State tends to assume a form that will render it capable of being directly utilized by people's power; there is no longer any question, then, of 'destroying' the State; and already on the horizon appears the 'abandonment' of the dictatorship of the proletariat. 2. If the State is nearly ready, the forces are also there nearly ready to occupy it; for facing the 'handful of monopolists', the whole of France stands as the victim of the monopolies; apart from a tiny clique (later extended to 600,000 big bourgeois'), the entire French people has an objective interest in suppressing the monopolies.

This notion of objective interest is itself a minor theoretico-political wonder—such as even d'Holbach and Helvetius were not so bold as to conceive, well versed though they were in the theory of interest. For what distinguishes objective interest from its realization? Nothing but consciousness. As retarded Marxists, we thought that such realization might depend on something like the class struggle. But no, it depends or consciousness alone. Well then, all that need be done is to awaken it! As everyone has known since Kautsky, consciousness comes from outside. It certainly does not come from within. So it will be awakened from outside by propaganda, the press and the mass-media: 'You have an objective interest in struggling against the handful of monopolists who exploit you only become conscious of this, and you will act accordingly!' There is no reason to doubt the success of the project. Or would you east doubt or the omnipotence of objective interest, and the omnipotence of ideas it relation to consciousness? What a vulgar materialist you are!

Nor is this all that is involved in the fate of Marxist theory within the Party. For whoever talks of the abandonment of Marxist theory must also be talking about the abandonment of concrete analysis. This assertion may seem curious to those who construct an abstract idea of Marxist theory and, for that very reason, readily counterpose it to the idea of

Marxism is concrete analysis of a concrete situation'), they are one and the same thing. All that differs is the scale of the object. Now, the whole Marxist tradition is stamped with the demand for concrete analysis. Anothis demand corresponds to a political necessity. The concrete analysis of all the elements involved in the complex class relations or effects of a given situation means at once discovery of the real (which always contain surprises, 'something new') and determination of the line to be followed in order that the goals of struggle may be attained.

But this infinitely valuable practice also has disappeared from the Party Before the war, Maurice Thorez still had the courage to present concrete analyses of class relations in France. Since the war, that tradition has gradually been lost. There was nothing about class relations in France 2 the Twentieth, Twenty-First or Twenty-Second Congresses. We car understand why: the leadership had 'its' CME theory; and since is considered the theory to be true, it used it as an advance-substitute for concrete analysis. If you wanted to make it 'concrete', you had only to apply it from above to anything that moves. Here too, the Party revived an old Stalinist tradition of dogmatic/speculative interpretation of Marxism: concrete truth is when you apply theory; theory is therefore the truth of truths, and in the end, concrete analysis becomes superfluous since it is only the truth applied. This schema of concrete truth as the 'application' of a higher truth had already wrought havoc in the Second International. The havoc reappeared under Stalin and did not leave the French Party untouched. Conceiving concrete analysis as the application of theory leads—unless one is diverted—into complete political deadends, which are still more serious than the effects of manufacturing a 'theory' to order.

The Buffer

Our national history provides us with an edifying illustration: that of the 'buffer'. A few years ago, a regional secretary used this astonishing word to refer to the fact that the Party's vote had not increased at recent by-elections. This is a truly topical question, when we consider that, for a very long time now, the Party has been 'hovering' around 20–21 per cent of the vote: any further advance is... blocked. This time, it even treated itself to a reduction of 0-8 per cent in the level of its historical 'buffer'. But who has ever taken the term seriously and made an analysis of the facts? Who has ever tried to determine the real limits, or the economic, social and ideological class reasons for this standstill? In short, who has made a concrete analysis of the class-political situation of the French Party itself?

The leadership had its answer in the 'theory' of CME—which, as it happens, is completely silent on the point in question. It was enough that someone should apply the theory—as some in fact tried to do. But the leadership never posed the problem in terms of concrete analysis. For that would have been to discover quite a few unseemly realities—not least, the fact that the 'buffer' mainly lies not in the petty bourgeoisie (as many like to think) but in the working class itself. Only 33 per cent of the working class gave their votes to the Party: 30 per cent voted for the sp, 20 per cent for the Right, and the remainder took refuge in abstention or in fierce

Quite an object-lesson, when one thinks of Georges Marchais's peremptory declaration of three years ago: 'The working class has achieved political unity'! (He was referring to... the Union of the Left.) Now, far from having been achieved, the political unity of the working class is still an objective lying in front of us.

We must remember that the working class is no more a whole than are other classes: it is neither one, nor homogeneous, nor miraculously free from internal contradictions. It certainly shares the exploitation which is suffered by all productive workers, and which marks it off from the exploited peasantry and petty bourgeoisie. But its working and living conditions are not everywhere the same, and its resistance to bourgeois hegemony varies with the concentration of production and the historical results of struggle. It is this which explains the diversity of political reactions and the uneven character of class consciousness. But the Party leadership has contempt for concrete analysis and for theory. It does not matter if this leads it into a dead-end, because it still keeps control over examination of the situation. We can be sure in advance of what it will say (apart from electoral sociology and so on) when it passes the election, results through its 'fine tooth-comb': 'Not enough consciousness' among the militants and the workers; 'not enough effort to make our ideas understood'. Since the line is sacrosanct and determined by 'the objective interest' of the people of France, the only variables are consciousness and effort, are they not? In any case, no concrete reality and no concrete analysis.

Who would dare to say that the 'buffer' does not have something to do with the image of the inner-Party reality given by the leadership's practice, and with the visible effects produced by that reality? The leadership may imagine that the Twenty-Second Congress was a Fountain of Youth that washed away the bad memories of the past. But people have a long memory, and blackmailing talk about anticommunism no longer cuts any ice at all! Whether we like it or not, the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie clings to its mythical ideology of property and freedom in a world that is fast stripping them away. And when it sees the Communists with their freshly-painted promises about property and freedom, it certainly lets them speak, but does not therefore stop thinking. Talk away! It is all very well to be heir to the October Revolution, and to preserve the memory of Stalingrad. But what of the massacre and deportation of recalcitrant peasants baptized as kulaks? What of the crushing of the middle classes, the Gulag Archipelego, the repression that still goes on twenty-five years after Stalin's death? Wher the only guarantees offered are words that are immediately contradicted ir the only possible field of verification, namely the internal practices of the Party, then it is clear that the 'buffer' also lies within the Party itself.

The Problem of Credibility

On this question, it must be said that the leadership is now breaking it own records. It imagines that the people are so stupid as to take the work of a leadership that talks loud and clear about change, democracy and freedom in relation to a country which it does not govern and has never governed. But in these conditions, what proof is there? Certainly not George

a finger on the people's freedoms.' For everyone thought to himself! "Too true, they've never had the chance!" Who can seriously think that the people's memory is so short that it has forgotten the contempt for freedom and truth with which the PCF leadership morally broke and crushed men under the weight of base accusations invented wholesale just to dishonour them? There were real 'Moscow trials' right here in France. The death sentences were missing, but you can also make a man die of dishonour, by torturing him with the charge of being a 'policeagent', 'crook' or 'traitor'; by forcing all his old comrades-in-arms to condemn, shun and calumniate him, renouncing their own past. That happened in France, between 1948 and 1965. The Communist Party was not in power, and did not 'lay a finger on the people's freedoms'. Doubtless that is why it does nothing to recall, regret or repair those abominations for which its leadership alone was responsible.

It is understandable that the leadership should not be partial to concrete analyses. For while they are exacting and bear fruit, they do not forgive. And since they bring theory into play, it is understandable that the leadership should not be partial to theory. When it is alive, theory too is exacting and bears fruit; but it too does not forgive.

We have to go into all these questions in order to form an idea of the Party's ideology. Rooted in the militants' trust and in its exploitation by the leadership, resting on an arbitrary 'theory' tailor-made to serve a pre-established political line, scorning real theory and concrete analysis of the concrete situation, this ideology is reduced in practice to the following caricatural function: to 'cement' Party unity at any price around a leadership which holds not only the power to order men, but the power to order truth, according to a 'line' fixed by itself alone.

Ideology, 'theory' and analysis are thus reduced to the level of instruments for manipulating the militants—for convincing them to take up 'freely' a line of practice fixed outside themselves. The pragmatism of this method conflicts with what is most precious in the Marxist tradition: namely, the fertile requirement that theory and living analysis should extend the ideology of Party militants to the origins and perspectives of the struggle in which they are engaged. What is at stake beneath all these questions of theory, analysis and ideology is, in the last analysis, the Party's relationship to the masses as expressed in its political practice.

The Solution: Leave the Fortress

All we need is a little historical awareness in order to see that the forms of political practice are as varied as the classes in power or fighting for power. Each of these rules or struggles according to the practice which best corresponds to the constraints of its own battle and its own interests. Thus, drawing on the history and theorists of the bourgeoisie, we may state that the latter's characteristic political practice consists in *getting others to ensure its domination*. That is already true of Machiavelli, even though Gramsci did not see it; and it is also true of all the bourgeois revolutions that followed, whether they were of an active or 'passive' character. The bourgeoisie knew how to accomplish its revolution

peasants and proletarians. It always knew how to let their forces break loose and then wait for them at the crossroads of power, ready to drown them in blood or put them down peacefully and thus confiscate the fruits of its own victory and their defeat.

In opposition to the bourgeois practice of politics, the Marxist tradition has always defended the thesis that the proletariat has to 'liberate itself'. It can count on no class and no liberator other than itself; it can rely only on the strength of its organization. It has no other choice, no exploited mass whom it can manipulate. Moreover, since it is compelled to forge lasting alliances, the proletariat cannot treat its allies as others—as forces at its mercy who can be dominated as it sees fit. It must treat them as true equals, whose historical personality has to be respected. However, the proletariat is aware of the potentially very serious danger that it will fall into the ideological trap of bourgeois political practice: that it will either surrender to class collaboration and objectively place itself at the service of the bourgeoisie (e.g. social democracy), or reproduce within itself, under the illusion of remaining independent, the bourgeois practice of politics. Of course, the two forms may go hand in hand.

What is meant by reproducing bourgeois political practice within the proletariat? It is to treat Party militants and the masses as others, through whom the leadership has its policies put into operation in the puresi bourgeois style. All that is required to give 'free play' to the whole internal Party mechanism, which spontaneously reproduces the separation of leadership and militants, Party and masses. The leadership then makes use of this separation for its own style of politics: its political practice tends to reproduce bourgeois political practice, insofar as i serves to separate the leadership from the militants, the Party from the masses.

Everything from Above

It was with these points in mind that we made our repeated observation: on the content and 'realization' of the 1972 line. Everything was done from above, with no attempt to close the gap separating off the member ship, and a fortiori with no concern for the masses themselves. Of course as in bourgeois practice, manipulation of the militants and the masse through grand leadership manoeuvres was coupled with contempt fo theory and the most vulgar pragmatism. In fact, contempt for th militants and the masses always goes hand in hand with contempt fo theory and concrete analysis, and thus with their opposites: authori tarianism and a pragmatist attitude to truth (true is that which works) Everything that has happened since 1972, and above all since Septembe 1977, has done no more than confirm a classical thesis: when a workers party tends to abandon the principles of class independence in its political practice, it spontaneously and necessarily tends to reproduce bourgeoi political practice within itself We know the results: a little 'buffer', c derisory numerical significance. But a whole world was concentrated i the 1 or 2 per cent of votes which the Left failed to winl

How should we interpret the fact that, in keeping with Stalinist tradition

immediately learns the price he has to pay); and that this 'property' in theory and Truth conceals other 'properties': the militants and the masses themselves? It is a reality that should be understood not in individual terms but in terms of a system. The style of individuals changes: the Stalinism of our leaders has become 'humanist' and may, in some cases, even be 'open'. But it is not that which counts. The important thing is that this whole tendency towards bourgeois political practice within the Party is the result of a system that operates by stself, independently of the individuals who find their place within it. It forces these individuals to be what they are: parties to the system and parties caught in the system. When it is said that the Party functions through authority, from above, this authority should not be understood as a kind of personal passion to be found in a particular leader. It is located within the apparatus machine, which, secreting the practices and the consequences of authority at every level of 'responsibility', automatically produces secrecy, suspicion, mistrust and trickery.

Finally, moreover, we have to look behind this apparatus machine, at the gulf imposed between leaders and militants, between the Party and the popular masses. We cannot, therefore, deal only with the Party or even just with the features of its political practice. We must speak of the Party's political relation to the broad masses, and thus of its political line. We must discuss the question that is decisive for this political line: the question of alliances.

A party and a line are indispensable in helping the working class to organize as a class—or, which comes to the same thing, to organize its class struggle. Now, just as the party should not be cultivated for its own sake, so the working class should not be organized for its own sake or it will fall into isolation. The working class proper exists within broad masses of exploited and oppressed workers, of which it is the section best able to organize itself and show the way to all the exploited. The Marxist tradition considers that broad mass action is the determining force, and that working-class action should be conceived as a function of this determination. It is from the broad masses that come the historical initiatives of revolutionary scope: the invention of the Commune, the 1936 factory occupations, the popular conquest of Committees of Liberation during the 1944—5 period, the enormous surprise of May 1968, and so on. A party is judged above all by its capacity to pay attention to the needs and initiatives of the popular masses.

The Party once knew how to take a stand on the decisive question of a close relationship with the masses. That is indeed a peculiar tendency of its history. But there is also an opposite tendency which is constantly being strengthened: namely, a reflex of rejection when faced with anything not controlled by the apparatus—with new forms that might unsettle fixed certainties and the established order. Thus, in May 1968, the Party deliberately cut itself off from the student and petty-bourgeois masses because it did not have control over them! This instinctive fear of anything not under the control of its 'theory' or its apparatus has the general consequence that, when the Party does move into action, it is always a good few trains late. Even so, it carries in its briefcase in advance

open its ears to the masses. Marx said: 'Consciousness always lag: behind.' And so the Party leadership imperturbably applies the letter of this principle, not suspecting the irony of the matter: it is sure of being conscious because it lags behind.

Clearly, if a party is linked to the masses through living, attentive and open relations, then its line can be broad and flexible at the same time as being correct; and if, on the contrary, those relations are ones of distrust deafness and lagging behind, then the line will be authoritarian and cramped, even though it may be correct in the abstract. We may judg how things stand by the central question of every revolutionary line, th question of alliances. Ever since the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, thentire Marxist tradition has defended the need for alliances. The working class cannot be victorious if it is alone: its struggle would then be 'funeral-solo' (Marx).

Two Types of Alliance

But there are alliances and alliances. And on this point, two limiting conceptions stand opposed to each other. Either alliances are conceive in terms of a contract between political organizations which 'own' their voters; or else they are conceived in terms of a combat waged by the organized section of the working class in order to extend its influence. I the first case, it is a question of applying a juridical and electoralis conception: such was the contract 'at the top' that initiated the Union of the Left. But in the second case we are talking of a conception which while respecting pluralism and perhaps involving a juridical contract 's the top', directly engages the party in the mass struggle to extend it audience and capture broader positions—above all in the working class and petty bourgeoisie. In short, then, it is a question of primacy: eithe primacy of contract or primacy of combat.

No doubt the leadership declared that 'the Union is a combat'. But it hard to see what content this formally correct slogan could have had once the leadership had opposed the constitution of popular committee (contrary to the position it adopted in 1934-6 within the Popular Froi perspective). In fact, the leadership substituted for combat within t. masses—which would have given the Union a real basis—combat between organizations, under cover of remaining faithful to the Commo Programme. It thereby managed to replace unitary electoralism ('rigl opportunism') with a secturian electoralism, which sought to pass off or party's domination over another as the real hegemony or 'leadir influence' of the working class within the popular movement. But th was still-more than ever-electoralism, and thus right opportunisr The leadership went so far as to launch a series of appeals to the masse from the September dramatization ('Everything depends on youl', Georges Marchais said at the Fête de l'Humanité) to the stupefyii formula: "Turn the first round into a gigantic "national petition" for a updated and improved Common Programme and for support for the Communists!'

From 1972 to 1977, nothing was done to arouse and develop initiatives

is more, any suggestion of popular committees was rejected by invoking the risk of 'manipulation'. And then, after crushing their initiative for years on end, the leadership finally made an appeal to the masses. To avoid being 'manipulated', it ended up quite simply manipulating the masses. Just imagine: the masses were expected to respond to the party leadership's appeal mextremis by suddenly mobilizing their forces and transforming their civic vote into a 'petition' of support for the 'battle' being waged by the Party within the Union of the Left! Here we can see what happens when a conception of union through leadership contract is chosen, and when a desperate last-minute attempt is made to reverse the outcome by writing combat into the contract. Electoralism is not avoided but worsened; and confusion is only increased by an appeal for mobilization of the masses, when they were in the previous period carefully excluded from the struggle.

And yet, the policy of union could perfectly well have been a mass-struggle policy: one of popular union, combining a contract signed 'at the top' with a united struggle at the base, in which the Party could have extended its influence beyond the 'buffer'. In that event, combat would have been directly inscribed in the contract and priority given to united mass struggle. No longer treated as the manipulable object of a bourgeois practice, the masses would have been trusted to thwart any manoeuvres or manipulation; the conditions would have been created for a working-class and people's policy of popular unity.

Distrust of the Masses

The leadership's deep-rooted, tenacious and inveterate distrust of the masses prevented the Party from taking this liberating choice. Instead, it fell back upon a policy of contract, in which the Union was managed 'from the top'. Quite literally, the Party bad not wanted to bear the slogan 'popular unity' which arose spontaneously from the huge workers' processions of 1973–5. Was this fear of risk, disguised as fear of adventure? Or was it, in the end, just straightforward routinism? It would be interesting to hear the reasons given by the leadership. But in any case, the leadership withdrew—and drew the Party—into the protective fortress of old habits. The Left was defeated, but the fortress stands as immovable as ever, whatever the colour of the sky.

All that has just been said must be completed and illuminated by a view of the Party from the outside. For the Party exists not just in its apparatus, its practice, its conceptions and its line, but also in the outside world, in the concrete French situation. And it must be said that it occupies a quite specific position there. It must be said that, owing to its distrust of the masses and its withdrawal into itself, the Party exists in French society like a garrison in a fortress, rather than 'a fish in water'. Now a fortress, of course, holds out and lasts; indeed, it is made for that. And the Party, of course, needs continuity. But if it is to be the continuity of a fortress, then one might as well read Vauban as Marx. Machiavelli said that he who builds and takes refuge in a fortress makes himself the prisoner of its walls: he is lost not only to war but also to politics.

The fortress may have had a reason for existing during the early years of

today, the Party should treat it not as a refuge, but as a mere base operations. In fact, that is what it did in 1934–6, when its policy ope broadly to the masses in movement. ('We have no ministers, but we have the Ministry of the Masses!'—Maurice Thorez.) The same was t during the period of the Resistance. For revolutionaries, a fortress ba reason for existence unless they themselves go out to deploy their forces among masses. We must look things straight in the face: the March 1978 defeat the defeat of a political line and practice which are one with the Par fortress-like functioning and its refusal to go out and 'lose itself' (i.e. i itself again) in the masses.

To say that the Party appears as a fortress in French society no do strikes a strange chord. For in fact, what is involved is a withdraw withdrawal into a mere third of the working class, preventive withdra before the masses, and a withdrawal before events that reaches the poof a systematic lag. Yet the leadership finds a way to make a virtue ou necessity, by presenting this unmotivated withdrawal as a sign strength, prudence and even political far-sightedness! Strange sightedness, that involves blinding oneself to the objective significance the withdrawal—to the fact that it can only lead to an isolation of the Ps in French society which, clearly, no rise in membership can suffice break down. But when someone points out this isolation, which sho be of the highest concern to the Party, the leadership immediately lays blame on the bourgeoisie and its gut anti-communism. And since the are no perks, it sees this isolation simply as proof that the Party is not 'I the rest'.

It is right that the question of the Party and its transformation should at the heart of the members' preoccupations. If the Party has to chan should it not become 'a party like the rest'? If it does not become a pa 'like the rest', how can it possibly be transformed? This question ref precisely to the problem of ending the Party's isolation or, in the words our metaphor, leaving the fortress. A grave opportunist danger h threatens the Party. For there are two ways of 'leaving the fortress': fi by standing still, liquidating the revolutionary tradition, a 'transforming' the Party from a party of withdrawal, as it is today, int formally liberal one 'like the rest'; or second, by abandoning fortress-l withdrawal and resolutely involving the Party in the mass moveme extending its zone of influence through struggle, and finding in that ms oriented struggle the real reasons for transforming the Party, by giving the life that comes from the masses.

In this case, moreover, there can be no question of 'a party like the re borrowing its internal rules from the bourgeois parties. The Party has invent these rules on the basis of its mass practice and its militar experience and analyses, while retaining what is best in the histori experience of the revolutionary movement. I am not brandishing wor but speaking of facts. If only the militants were at last able to expr themselves, we would be surprised at the wealth of concrete propose matured through reflection, which they already have in their heads. The is already enough strength, will and lucidity in the Party's working-cl and popular base to change 'what can last no longer' and create no

autonomy, and satisfy its need for real freedom in reflection, discussion and action.

A word should be said about the question which is now agitating all the bourgeois propaganda against the Party: namely, democratic centralism. We can be sure that the militants will not fall into the bourgeois trap: they will defend the principle, not through fetishism of the statutes or attachment to the past for its own sake, but because they know that if a party is not to be 'like the rest', it needs rules different from the rest: rules which point to a degree of freedom incommensurate with—and much richer than—bourgeois rights. They also know that a living party will invent new forms of such freedom together with the masses, without taking advice from experts in bourgeois democracy—be they Communist or not.

Conditions for Change

For ourselves, we can now draw from the analysis a number of conclusions for future work and struggle. I shall present them in numerical order, but wish to imply no priority and no subordination. They all hang closely together, and we shall have to set to work in every field at once. At all costs, then, we need:

- 1. A Marxist theory brought back to life: one that is not hardened and deformed by consecrated formulae, but lucid, critical and rigorous. A Marxist theory rescued from its current crisis in the Communist movement by the practice of concrete analysis and the practice of popular struggle. A theory which will not dodge mass initiatives and social transformations, but which will, on the contrary, openly face them and impregnate and nourish itself with them.
- 2. A thorough critique and reform of the Party's internal organization and mode of functioning. The great debate started by the rank and file must involve the Party in concrete analysis of the existing rules of democratic centralism and their political consequences. It is not a question of giving up democratic centralism, but of renewing and transforming it in such a way that it will be placed at the service of a revolutionary mass party and maintain the Party's specificity and independence from the bourgeoisie.
- 3. A concrete analysis of the class situation in France. This will allow the Party to understand (in order to counter) the objectives, turns and manoeuvres of the bourgeois class struggle; to grasp the specific course of the division and contradictions within the working class, as well as in the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie; and lastly, to know the nature of the parties, especially the CP and SP, and their place in these class relations.
- 4. A policy of alliance of all working-class and popular forces, combining agreements at the top with the developing struggle of the Party at the base. A lim of popular union (free of reformism or secturianism) for active mobilization of the masses and unfettered development of their initiative.

I have here given only the general principles. But provided these conditions are fulfilled, it is possible for the Party to change. It will be able to leave behind all the equivocations and constrictions inherited from the past; to redeem its errors and failures; and to assist the rallying of the popular masses for their long-awaited victory.

Translated by Patrick Camiller

TEN THOUSAND WORKING DAY. Robert Schran

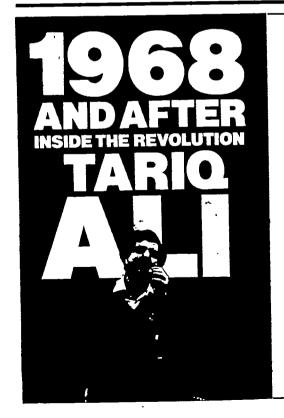
This is a book about work, all kinds of work, from day labour to management Whomakes it special is the extraordinary variety of the author's work history. Plumbe farmhand, auto mechanic, machinist, furniture factory labourer, coal miner, Schrar entered college for the first time in his forties, and went on to earn a doctorate a decac later. No academic could relate the tales of the workplace that Schrank tells from his own experience in forty years—ten thousand working days—of labour; and, naturall without an academic background, the worker's story would carry less power a sociological assessment.

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Introduction to Medvedev

Nikolai Bukharin, despite the extent of his published work (much of which has now become available in English), and despite a full-scale biography1 (something which does not exist for most leading Bolsheviks), remains a curiously elusive and paradoxical figure. A prominent Left Bolshevik until 1921, by 1923 he had nevertheless become the principal exponent of a gradualist interpretation and extension of the New Economic Policy, and was to lead the Right in the Party for the rest of the decade. Having laid the ideological basis for Stalin's rise to power in the mid-twenties, above all through his concept of building 'socialism in one country', he has nevertheless become the symbol for influential currents within Eurocommunism of a classical Marxist tradition that can be seen as implicitly anti-Stalinist. After spearpointing the onslaught on the Joint Opposition of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky in 1926-7, in a campaign of unprecedented distortion and vilification, under conditions in which prior organizational measures had made 'discussion' a farce, Bukharin has nevertheless come to represent for many later Communists a dignified and loyal opposition 'from within'. The most substantial theorist apart from Lenin and Trotsky among the Bolsheviks, he nevertheless presided over the muzzling of theoretical work within the Communist International. His conduct at his trial has been variously seen as the epitome of capitulation, and as a masterpiece of subtle resistance against all odds. Personally close to Lenin, who described him as 'the favourite of the Party', Bukharin was nevertheless to be executed on trumped-up charges which included that of planning to assassinate Lenin—an absurd

¹ Stephen Cohen, Behbern and the Bolthouk Revolution, London & New York 1974. For a critical assessment of Cohen's book, see E. H. Carr's review in the Times Literary Supplement, 20 September 1974, Tamara Deutscher's in Monthly Review, April 1975, and Marcel Liebman's in Socialist Register 1975.

⁸ Even Stalin was impressed by Bukharin's ardour at the fifteenth party conference in November 1926: 'Well done, Bukharin, well done. He does not speak, he slashes.'

accept for decades thereafter.

The account given below by Roy Medvedev of Bukharin's last years provides the fullest historical record to date of this tragic episode Medvedev, like Bukharin's widow and son, is active in the campaign fo his full rehabilitation, both juridically and within the Party. Thi campaign deserves the whole-hearted support of socialists in the West the rehabilitation of all the Bolshevik Old Guard—Trotský, Zinoviev Kamenev, Bukharin and the many others executed or assassinated a Stalin's behest and since written out of the history of the revolution which they helped to forge—will be of prime importance in settlin accounts with what remains of the Stalinist legacy to this day.

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Bukharin's Last Years

he beginning of 1936 did not yet seem to presage any tragedy, either for Nikolai anovich Bukharin or for our country as a whole. It is true that Kirov's sassination, and a number of closed political trials, at one of which Zinoviev and amenev were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, had created a state of intinuous tension. Nevertheless, it still remained possible for many former embers of the Zinovievite and Trotskyist oppositions to avoid repression by ice again publicly repenting their past 'sins'. And in the case of former 'Right' ipositionists, including Bukharin himself, more often than not even such pressions of repentance were not demanded.

this time, Bukharin was absorbed in his work as editor-in-chief of *Izvestia*. byiously, *Izvestia*'s significance and influence, either then or now, cannot be empared with that of *Pravda*, whose editor Bukharin had been prior to the defeat the so-called Right Opposition. At the same time, however, it was possible to ablish things in the less official *Izvestia* which could never have appeared in

firmseit the task of making Izristia an interesting newspaper, and he succeeded: in 1935–6, Izristia was the most popular and widely read Soviet newspaper. The second task he set himself was to give his newspaper a more decisively anti-fascist character, and this too he achieved. The Izristia collective quickly grew fond of Bukharin. He was simple and accessible, not standing on ceremony. He had an excellent knowledge of, and real liking for, the newspaper world. He possessed huge erudition and a great capacity for work. Articles by Bukharin ofter appeared in the newspaper. He showed concern for his fellow workers, and on their days off loved to join them on country excursions, during which they would all vie with each other in devising new forms of entertainment.

Bukharin continued to live in the Kremlin and remained on the Centra Committee of the crsu, although no longer as a full but as a candidate member. In his editorial work and in relationships with friends alike, he maintained the utmost loyalty. He never spoke badly behind Stalin's back either of Stalin himself or his policies, not allowing any hint of what could be termed 'opposition'. Of course, there were many things he did not know. To many other things he simply closed his eyes. Nevertheless, he could not have been ignorant of the major difficulties being experience by the country, and in particular by the peasantry. After all, a huge quantity of readers' letters flowed into the editorial offices of Izvestia from all parts of the country, and Bukharin had to read many of them—bu even this did not change his position. In those months, he did not ever meet with his recent collaborators in opposition, Tomsky and Rykov.

Bukharin's Trip to Paris

In the spring of 1936, the question arose of purchasing sections of the Marx-Engels archive, principally from the German Social-Democrats. A that time Germany was under the rule of fascism, while the Social Democratic Party, like the Communist Party, had been banned. Its loca organizations had been dissolved, and many activists had been arrested and were languishing in concentration camps. The majority of th leadership, however, had emigrated, and the bulk of the archives of tha party, with which Marx and Engels had been so closely linked in th second half of the nineteenth century, was removed to other Western countries — especially those where socialists were in power. The Germai Social-Democrats were extremely hard up for resources, and wer prepared to sell part of their archive to the Soviet Union (on th understanding that they would keep a copy). The Politburo of the Centra Committee appointed Bukharin to head the group that was sent to negotiate purchase of the archive. It is doubtful whether there wa anyone better suited in the Central Committee for these negotiations. Th group also included Adoratsky, a prominent employee of the Mars Engels-Lenin Institute, and Arosev, a member of the Party since 1907 an at that time a well-known writer and political figure. There were others I the group who were less well-known but, perhaps, no less influential.

The Politburo decision also specified those people with whom Bukhari was to meet and negotiate. These included, in particular, Otto Bauer, th

International and one of the most eminent exponents of Austro-Marxism. A number of Russian Mensheviks were also to be contacted, because they might be able to play a mediating role in the forthcoming negotiations. The most notable of these were Boris Nicolayevsky, a fifty-year-old journalist, writer and historian, who had himself collected abroad a large archive on the history of the social-democratic movement and of Bolshevism, and the Menshevik leader Dan, who in 1917 had headed the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. Nicolayevsky had emigrated to western Europe just after the October Revolution. Dan had lived in Russia until 1922, when he was deported 'as an enemy of the Soviet state'. Bukharin personally knew most of the social-democrats indicated by the Politburo decision, but had not met them since 1917.

Bukharin willingly accepted the Politburo's proposal concerning the trip. He prepared for it carefully, and with excitement. Of course, contacts had already been established in the past between Bolsheviks and Social-Democrats, for the purpose of either purchasing or collecting copies of works by Marx and Engels which were referred to and used by Western social-democrats, but which had not yet been published. In particular, a lot of work was done in this respect by the founder of the Marx-Engels Institute (later the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute), David Ryazanov. However, there was a substantial difference in atmosphere between the mid-twenties and the mid-thirties. So far as I am aware, nothing was printed in the Soviet press about the creation of this group around Bukharin, about its tasks or its subsequent contacts, though in the Western press there were many articles about it.

The group headed by Bukharin travelled to Norway, Denmark and other countries, and then based itself for a longer time in Paris, where Bukharin, Arosev and Adoratsky took adjoining rooms in the wellknown Hotel Lucrétia. Apparently Bukharin's wife, Anna Mikhailovna Larina, came to visit him in Paris for the month of April. She was a very young wife all of twenty. Bukharin had already been married twice before. But in those years getting married, like getting a divorce, was a comparatively easy matter. From his second wife, Bukharin had a daughter, Svetlana, who at the time of his new marriage was ten or eleven years old. Anna Mikhailovna Larina came from a well-known revolutionary family of long standing. From childhood she had been familiar with most of the leading Bolsheviks and knew Bukharin well, since he often used to visit colleagues and comrades, both in the Kremlin and in the governmental 'house on the embankment', and liked to play games with the children. At nineteen, Anna Mikhailovna was strikingly beautiful. In 1935 she married Bukharin, who was then forty-eight, and moved to his Kremlin flat. This flat had been lived in by Stalin until 1932, but after the suicide of Nadezhda Alliluyeva, Stalin had asked Bukharin to exchange flats, on the grounds that he found it difficult to stay there. Stalin also knew Anna Larina, and on hearing about her marriage, he telephoned to congratulate her. Soon afterwards, having met Bukharin with his wife in the Kremlin, Stalin said: 'Even here you managed to outflank me.'

When Bukharin's wife arrived in Paris, negotiations for the purchase of

were to appear in the West, in which people wrote about their meetings with Bukharin, about their evening strolls and discussions with him, and also about Bukharin's unexpected visits to people's homes (for example, to Dan's). These memoirs contained a great deal of fiction. Bukharin was in fact extremely cautious during his meetings with Mensheviks and Social-Democrats. Whenever any of them came to visit him at the hotel, Bukharın as a rule excused himself for a minute and called next door to request that Adoratsky and Arosev participate in the discussions. Furthermore, the French police was secretly following all Bukharin's activity and movements, for it feared attempts on his life by the numerous representatives of the Russian White emigration living in Paris. One day the police received information about preparations for such an attempt, and throughout the next two days Bukharin's hotel was surrounded by police. Soon after that incident, Bukharin moved to the Soviet embassy and lived there until the end of his mission. Finally, there is no question but that Bukharin's movements were also secretly followed by NKVD agents sent to Paris for the purpose—not to speak of Arosev and Adoratsky who had been assigned to him. So in view of all these circumstances, it is hardly possible to speak of any free movement or strolls in Paris by Bukharin. Recent memoirists have also claimed that Bukharin not only criticized Stalin's harmful activities and said that 'that man will soon destroy all of us', but that he also discussed with them the possibility of staying abroad. This was allegedly proposed by Bukharin's companions, but rejected by him. All this is extremely dubious. During the spring of 1936 there was not yet, even in the upper Party leadership, a mood of hopelessness; this began to emerge only at the end of 1936, and was to grow increasingly throughout 1937. During the earlier period the situation and mood was changing nearly every month.

Return to Moscow

Larina did not stay long in Paris, as she was in the last month of pregnancy. She flew to Moscow and arrived on 1 May 1936. Eight days later she gave birth to Bukharin's son, whom they called Yuri. Bukharin returned to Moscow a month or so later. His mission had reached a deadlock. The transaction had failed because Stalin felt that the Social-Democrats were asking too high a price for the Marx-Engels archives. Was this whole trip of Bukharin's in fact thought up by Stalin as grounds to later charge him with having had contact with Mensheviks, in betraya of his country? This is completely possible. In any event, at the court tria of the Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites', Bukharin was compelled to give evidence that 'during his last trip abroad in 1936 he made contact with Nicolayevsky, who was close to leadership circles in the Menshevil Party'. As Bukharin went on to state at the trial: 'From my discussion with Nicolayevsky, I found out that he was informed of the agreemen between the Rightists, the Zinovievites, the Kamenevites and the Trotskyites, and that in general he was informed of all kinds of possible actions, including the Ryutin platform. That is what we concretely and recently discussed, concluding on the following: in the event of a collapse of the Rightist centre, or the contact centre, or generally of the upper leve organization of the whole conspiracy, an agreement would be reached through Nicolayevsky with the leaders of the Second International to

that, while abroad, he contacted the well-known Social-Revolutional, Mark Vishnyak, the former Secretary of the Constituent Assembly. Is fact, according to Bukharin's testimony, both Nicolayevsky and Vishnyak were already acquainted with all the main 'centres' of the Righ and the Left. From whom? It turned out to be from Rykov.

At all events, the negotiations for the purchase of the archive material had not been successful. Having returned to Moscow, Bukharin lived for some time in his Kremlin flat. Then he decided to take a holiday in Pamir He loved to withdraw and relax in the mountains. This time he chose Kirghizia. He went there with his secretary, whose health was apparently not good. This secretary was not a personal friend, and it is possible that he was appointed by the NKVD to keep an eye on Bukharin. Bukharir arrived in Kirghizia at the end of July or the very beginning of August Soon afterwards he left with his companion for the mountains. Loca guides probably accompanied them. Transistor radios did not yet exist so Bukharin was cut off from all news.

Meanwhile, on 15 August the re-trial of the case of Zinoviev and Kamenev and a group of their supporters began in Moscow, in the Trade-union Building. They were no longer being accused simply of 'moral responsibility' for the assassination of Kirov, but of having directly organized this terrorist act and many other crimes, and indeed of preparing the assassination of all Politburo members. Some of the defendants, including Zinoviev, in their supplementary evidence at the preliminary investigation, had unexpectedly begun to testify about their 'criminal' links with Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky from the former Right opposition; with Radek, Pyatakov, Sokolnikov, Serebryakov and other former 'Trotskyites'; with Shlyapnikov, leader of the 1921 Workers Opposition and with several other former oppositionists, who in August 1936 had not been arrested and continued to live in freedom.

During this time, Bukharin was far from Moscow in the Pamir mountains. However, soon after the trial began in Moscow, Bukharin's companion became ill (or else pretended to be ill) and Bukharin came back down as far as Frunze. Here he first read about the Moscow trial. The information he read in the papers struck him like a thunderbolt. Earlier on he had already had a psychological breakdown, although he still conscientiously carried out all directives from Stalin and the Politburo. Bukharin had accepted the first trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev, at the beginning of 1935, as something necessary. Kirov, whom Bukharin had been fond of, had been assassinated, and the assassin had been a Zinovievite. It was alleged that Zinovievites led by Kolotanov had organized the assassination; for this, they had been tried and executed. Bukharin had no reason to believe that this was a provocation; he basically accepted the information contained in the internal Central Committee letter to Party organizations about Kirov's murder, and accepted the accusations against Zinoviev and his companions-in-arms at the trial at the beginning of 1935 ('moral responsibility'). Moreover,

¹ The Case of the Anti-Secont 'Bloc of Rights and Treathystus'. Report of Court Proceedings, Moscow 1938.

which implicated Zinoviev and Kamenev much more directly than had seemed to be the case eighteen months beforehand. For he knew Yagoda well, as he did many other prominent Chekists; he could not imagine them capable of extracting confessions from the accused by torture or torment.

On the other hand, Bukharin did think that Zinoviev and Kamenev were deliberately implicating other former oppositionists, including himself, in horrible crimes in order to efface all of them. He arrived in Frunze on the last or last-but-one day of the trial. The trial was reported not only in the Moscow newspapers, which took a day or two to arrive in Frunze, but also in the local press. Bukharin sent an urgent telegram to Yagoda and Stalin, requesting a delay in carrying out the sentence (he had no doubt that the sentence would be execution). He wanted to have a face-to-face confrontation with the accused, so that he could reply to the accusations against himself. But evidently, while still in Frunze, he found out that the executions had taken place.

Temporary Reprieve

Bukharin expected to be arrested while still in Frunze, but this did not happen Leaving all his things in Kirghizia, he got a ticket on the next flight to Moscow. At that time the journey from Frunze to Moscow took at least 24 hours even by plane. On the following day Bukharin's wife, Anna Mikhailovna, was telephoned and told that she should leave to meet her husband. During those days she had also been tormented with uncertainty, she had received no letters, and had read daily newspaper reports of the testimony of the accused, including of course the accusations against her husband, which she did not believe.

In the car which Bukharin still had at his disposal (and whose chauffeur was very attached to Nikolai Ivanovich), Anna Mikhailovna drove to the airport, which at that time was situated where today's underground stop 'Airport' is—on the other side of Leningrad Road. They were slightly late, and Bukharin had already arrived. He was sitting in the corner of the room on some kind of bundle, with his face buried in his hands so that he could not be recognized. Anna Mikhailovna and the chauffeur came up to him. 'Hello, Nikolai. Let's go home.' 'Where to?' 'Home to the Kremlin.' 'Will we be allowed into the Kremlin?' 'For the present we are still living there.' 'Then help to hide me, I don't want to be seen by anyone', said Bukharin and went to the car.

As soon as he arrived home Bukharin telephoned Stalin. But Stalin was not in Moscow, immediately after the trial and execution of all the accused, he had gone off to Sochi 'for a holiday'. Bukharin wrote him: lengthy letter, which began 'Dear Koba'. Throughout the next few days he hardly went anywhere. Also nobody telephoned him nor dropped by for a visit. Bukharin discussed the trial with his wife, assuring her that his was in no way guilty. His young wife did not much believe in Zinoviev' guilt either. 'How do you think', she asked her husband, 'Zinoviev o Kamenev were able to kill Kirov?' 'But aren't they killing me with thei testimony?', replied Bukharin.

Place. He did not know about Stalin's visit to Tomsky's flat, about their face-to-face discussion, about the fact that Stalin came to Tomsky's flat with a bottle of wine. Neither did he know that the discussion did not last long, that Tomsky's shout was heard, 'Get out, get out quickly', followed by unprintable abuse and then a shot. This was after Stalin had unhurnedly left, still carrying the bottle of wine. Rykov had also tried to commit suicide, but his relatives had stopped him, almost by force. Bukharin thought at first that Tomsky's suicide would be the ruin of them all; that it was as if he was admitting that the former Right leaders were somehow guilty. But later, when Bukharin met Rykov at a Central Committee plenum, he said: 'Tomsky turned out to be the smartest of us all'.

During the trial of Zinoviev and his comrades in misfortune, on I August 1936, the Public Prosecutor of the USSR, Vyshinsky, had already given instructions to begin an investigation into the participation in the 'counter-revolutionary plot' of Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky, Radek and others named at the trial. It is difficult to say how that investigation was carried out, but no interrogations or confrontations took place. Bukharin did not leave his home. He no longer, of course, appeared in the editorial offices of Izvestia, even though the legend 'Chief Editor, N. I. Bukharin' still always appeared on the last page of each issue. The 'investigation' proceeded quickly. On 10 September a communiqué was published in all major newspapers from the Public Prosecutor of the ussa, about the conclusions of the investigation 'carried out in connection with the testimony given at the trial of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite terrorist centre by several of the accused, about the participation in various degrees of N. I. Bukharın and A. I. Rykov in their criminal counter-revolutionary activities.' 'The investigation has failed to establish', said the Procurator's communiqué, 'a judicial basis for the proceedings against N. I. Bukharin and A. I. Rykov, and investigations into the present case have consequently been dropped.' Bukharin felt relieved, but his attention was not immediately drawn to the ambiguity of the formulation 'judicial basis', nor to the fact that the statement was only about Rykov and himself. Exhausted from the tension, he set off with his wife and son (and nanny) to a dasha in the country. He did not own a dasha himself, but as a candidate member of the Central Committee, he had the right to take holidays in a State dacha.

On the following day, late in the evening, Karl Radek arrived in haste. A burned-out politician, cynical, but clever and witty, Radek had not been close to Bukharin in the early years after the Revolution. In the midtwenties, Radek had joined the Left Opposition and fought against Stalin and Bukharin. At the end of the twenties he was exiled, but he quickly capitulated to Stalin. He renounced Trotsky and began to praise Stalin in all his speeches, articles and even in private conversation. At the same time, Radek remained an experienced and sharp political commentator; Bukharin, therefore, often drew him into work on Izvestia. Bukharin, as I wrote earlier, wanted not only to make Izvestia an interesting paper, but also to strengthen the anti-fascist character of the propaganda carried in it. Radek was particularly suitable for carrying out this task, and he wrote

Radek arrived in a state of utter dismay. He assured Bukharin that he hac nothing in common with the 'counter-revolutionary' and 'terrorist' activities of the 'Zinovievite-Trotskyite centre'. He asked Bukharin to write to Stalin about this as soon as he, Radek, was arrested. You know that in the Procurator's communiqué only Bukharin and Rykov are mentioned, nothing is said of the others.' For this reason Radek was certain that he would shortly be arrested. 'Ask Stalin', pleaded Radek, 'to take my case into his own hands, and not leave it to Yagoda; remind him of Blumkin.' Blumkin was a former Left sn who had killed the German ambassador Mirbach. Having been arrested, he had soon repented and broken with the srs. Not only was Blumkin pardoned, but he quickly became a worker in the Cheka and distinguished himself in many operations.2 For some time he was commander of Trotsky's train and came under his influence. Nonetheless he kept his GPU position, and carried out a number of GPU missions both in the USSR and abroad. During one of his trips to Turkey he secretly visited Trotsky. The latter, naïvel believing in the loyalty of his recent followers, wrote a long letter to Radek. Blumkin delivered Trotsky's letter to the address, but Radek, no opening the letter, took it straight to Yagoda, who of course passed it or to Stalin, Blumkin was promptly arrested and shot. Radek was convinced that by paying such a price he had shown his current loyalties. But he die not know Stalin very well. Stalin had not forgotten Radek's numerou sharp gibes, many of which were to outlive both men. Radek was arrested a day or two after his nocturnal conversation with Bukharin. As soon a he heard about it, Bukharin fulfilled his promise and wrote Stalin a lette describing everything that Radek had told him. But he ended the lette with an unworthy phrase: 'All the same, who knows?'

From Yagoda to Yezhov

Stalin spent most of September 1936 at his dacha in Sochi. On 2 September, Stalin and Zhdanov sent a telegram to Moscow addressed to Kaganovich, Molotov and other Politburo members remaining 1 Moscow, with the demand to urgently remove Yagoda from his post c People's Commissar of Internal Affairs and to appoint Yezhov to the position. Yezhov had been swiftly promoted, and was a comparativel young worker in the Party apparatus. Only twenty-five years old, he wa already an elected member of the Central Committee, and had bee elected a Secretary of the Central Committee and chairman of the Part Control Commission eighteen months before that. The removal c Yagoda and appointment of Yezhov was not immediately perceived as harbinger of the strengthening of terror. Few people knew the content of that Stalin/Zhdanov telegram, in which they motivated the necessit for removing Yagoda by stating that the OGPU 'was late by four years 1 exposing the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc'. Although during the autum of 1936 repression was comparatively light, this can be explained b political considerations—the discussion and acceptance of the new Constitution of the ussa, in the creation of which Bukharin had played

According to Nadezhda Mandelstam's account in Hape Agenti Hape, Blumkin was alread in the Cheka when he made the assassination attempt. (Trans.)

and by the fact that Yezhov needed time to reorganize the NKVD apparatus which had been handed over by Yagoda.

Prior to his new appointment, Yezhov had already spent some months controlling the work of the NKVD in line with the Central Committee of the Party. Once he became the Commissar of Internal Affairs, he dismissed a whole group of Yagoda's followers and appointed some new workers, whom he knew well and who were committed to himself, to responsible posts. But on the whole one should not exaggerate the role of Yezhov. Yezhov was not a cadre worker of the NKVD, and thus did not know many of the particularities and specificities of that profession. He did not have sufficient knowledge for work in such complicated branches as intelligence and counter-intelligence. For this reason, he was not able to fully replace the already existing NKVD apparatus. He made a number of changes, but as his closest advisers he chose, in the majority of cases, professional Chekists. Thus his closest counsellor and deputy, and of course the main organizer of the future court trials, came to be Zakowsky, who was also head of the Leningrad NKVD.

Following Stalin's orders—and Yezhov carried them out blindly and slavishly—the new People's Commissar began to prepare for new trials and new repressions. The plan for this repression originated not at NKVD headquarters, but in Stalin's head. Firstly, during the autumn many former Trotskyists were arrested: Radek, Sokolnikov, Serebryakov and others. With these arrests, intensive preparations began for a new court performance. The success of the recent trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev and others had encouraged Stalin to make the new trial more 'open'. Not only were specially chosen representatives of the Soviet public to be invited, but also foreign correspondents and some private individuals from the West. Although at the beginning of 1936 the Public Prosecutor of the user had declared that the investigation into Bukharin's and Rykov's involvement had been terminated, now that a new Commissar had been appointed to the NKVD, the investigation was resumed. This was the beginning of hard times for Bukharin.

Cat-and-Mouse

Stalin now started a new practice: the most important statements made by those under arrest were duplicated and sent out marked 'confidential' to all members and candidate members of the Central Committee. Bukharin, like Rykov, also received copies of such dossiers from the NEVD. He did not know or guess by what methods the NEVD was able to get its victims to slander themselves and their comrades. With horror and disbelief he read through the terrible statements. His disbelief was understandable, since his own name was mentioned quite often as a prominent organizer of terrorism and sabotage.

Bukharin did not know what to do. He had only one hope left, and that was Stalin. At one time they had been friends, or at least so Bukharin thought; even now, he still began all his letters to Stalin 'Dear Koba'l They had spent a lot of time together, enjoying themselves and singing

wrestling, the sturdy Bukharin always floored Stalin-Koba, and the latte would get up from the grass joking and laughing. Bukharin also wrote to other former friends: Ordzhonikidze, Kalinin, Voroshilov. But time were difficult for Ordzhonikidze; his brother Populya and some of hi friends had been arrested. Kalinin did not reply to Bukharin's letters. And Voroshilov, who could also have simply not replied, unexpectedly sent short, abusive note: 'I beg you, comrade Bukharin, never to write to magain with requests of any sort.' He even used the formal plural 'you', as it of a stranger rather than a friend and political comrade.

Stalin too did not reply; but he still made sure to leave Bukharin wit some shadow of hope. According to the testimony of Bukharin's wife, of the nineteenth anniversary of the October Revolution, on 7 Novembe 1936, Bukharin decided to go to Red Square. He did not go, as in the past to the platform on top of the Lenin Mausoleum; instead, he presented hi pass as Editor of *Izvestia* to sit on the platform to one side. From th Mausoleum, Stalin noticed Bukharin. Larina unexpectedly saw a sentr making his way through the thick crowds of people towards her an Bukharin. She thought that he was going to ask them to leave the squar forthwith. But instead he saluted Bukharin and said: 'Comrade Bukharir comrade Stalin has sent me to say that you are not in the correct place an to ask you to come to the Mausoleum.'

Nevertheless, immediately after the anniversary celebrations, an eve more difficult period began. Not at the Lubyanka, but in the Kremli itself, they started organizing a whole series of confrontations betwee Bukharin and those under arrest: both 'Trotskyists', and disciples of h own from the so-called 'Bukharin School'. There were confrontation with Sokolnikov, Serebryakov, Radek. And all of them talked about the criminal ties with Bukharin; about the existence of yet anothe underground counter-revolutionary and terrorist centre at whose hear allegedly, stood Bukharin. Bukharin denied everything, but each time l returned home in dismay and despair. He was especially shaken by h confrontation with Yefim Tseitlin, one of his favourite disciples. Yefi testified in his presence that Bukharin had personally handed him revolver and positioned him on the corner of a street along which Stal was supposed to ride; but on that day Stalin had taken a different rout and the attempt on his life had never taken place. All these statements, as have said, were duplicated and distributed to each Central Committe member.

On his return home from the confrontation with Yefim, Bukharin too his revolver. On the golden plate fastened to its handle was engraved. "I Leader of the Proletarian Revolution N. I. Bukharin from Kli Voroshilov." Bukharin decided that nothing more remained for hi

² The group of young Party intellectuals known as the 'Bukharin School' first rose prominence in the inner-Party struggles in 1925, when they were vigorously denounced the Zinovievite opposition in the polemics preceding the Fourteenth Congress. Former fact as early as 1922, the grouping was not fundamentally dissimilar to the followings some other Bolshevik leaders—made up of secretaries, sides, ministerial subordinates intellectual disciples—but was probably the most homogeneous and identifiable (Tran

in his office. He held the revolver for a long time in his hand, but in the end was not able to shoot himself. During subsequent days, this was to be repeated many times. Sometimes Bukharin would hold the revolver in his hand in the presence of his wife, toss it up in the air and then hide it in his desk. Quite often these outbursts would end in hysterics, and on these occasions it would take a long time for him to return, painfully, to his normal self.

One day, apparently at the end of December 1936, a group of about ten NKVD men came to Bukharin's flat with a search warrant. Just as they began their work, the internal Kremlin telephone rang. Bukharin lifted the receiver and the NKVD man in charge of the search stood next to him to listen to the conversation: during a search, telephone conversations were generally not allowed, but this was a special line and Bukharin was after all a Central Committee member. Both Bukharin and the Chekist next to him recognized the voice as Stalin's. 'So how are things with you, Nikolai?', asked Stalin as though nothing was happening. Nikolai Ivanovich was taken aback, but then said in embarrassment that the NKVD had just arrived for a search. Without questioning him further, Stalin said loudly: 'Send them all to the devil!' The search was at once abandoned.

Nevertheless, at the December 1936 Central Committee Plenum, held in the Kremlin, for the first time the question of the new accusations against Bukharin and Rykov was raised In this period, Central Committee members could not as yet be arrested wherever convenient—on the street, at home, on a train, at a dacha. (Only in the summer of 1937 did a special decision of the Central Committee give the NKVD extraordinary powers to do this—powers which were supposed to last for one year, but which instead remained in force throughout the rest of Stalin's rule.) For the moment, the Central Committee itself had to sanction the arrest of one of its own members or candidates. All those who spoke at the Plenum demanded the immediate arrest of Bukharin and Rykov. Stalin was the last to speak, and to everyone's surprise he said that one should not act hastily on the question; that it was necessary to allow the NKVD to investigate further the guilt or innocence of Bukharin and Rykov.

As a result, the December Plenum did not sanction their arrest. Bukharin continued, as a candidate member of the Central Committee, to receive the stenographic record of new interrogation sessions; and the confrontations also continued. I mentioned earlier that Bukharin was no longer actually working on *Iquestia*, which was being edited by his deputy. One day, however, Bukharin unexpectedly received a telephone call from the Central Committee asking him to go to the editorial office, in order to welcome a western writer, Leon Feuchtwanger, who was at that time in Moscow. Bukharin complied, greeting Feuchtwanger in his office. It was a game. Feuchtwanger knew about the accusations against Bukharin. The latter's presence in the office of one of the main Soviet papers was necessary to demonstrate the 'objectivity' of Soviet justice to the passing visitor.

The year 1937 began with a new great political trial. This was the trial the so-called 'parallel centre', for which the NEVO impresarios had main enrolled former Trotskyists who, by the 1930s, had long since broke with Trotsky and been reinstated in the Party, holding importa positions in Soviet state institutions, the press, etc: Pyatakov, Rade Livshits, Sokolnikov, Serebryakov and twelve others. The ma defendant, Yuri Pyatakov, had for many years been first deputy to tl People's Commissar for Heavy Industry, Ordzhonikidze. Pyatakov w undoubtedly more skilful and experienced as an administrator, and evinore as an economist, than his superior—and his role and services in tindustrialization of the Soviet Union, during the first and second fivyear plans, were correspondingly greater. Livshits had until recently be the Deputy People's Commissar for Road-building. Sokolnikov a Serebryakov had long been prominent within the Party.

This trial will not be discussed directly here. But we should point out the accusations made during it against Bukharin had such a definite character that his days were obviously numbered. It was no accident the organizers of the trial chose Radek to voice these accusations: Rade a recent colleague on Ixpustia, who a few months before had come Bukharin's cottage and asked for his intercession. Once Radek had be arrested, he could not long stand being locked up, waiting interrogation and torture. He very quickly started to collaborate with minvestigators, helping them to create all the legends about a 'paralicentre, and about his links with both already 'unmasked' and s 'masked' counter-revolutionary organizations. Most probably it a mainly thanks to Radek's assistance that the 1937 trial was prepared quickly and ran so 'smoothly'; as we know, he was not sentenced to de by firing squad, receiving instead ten years' imprisonment.

There is evidence that Radek also helped invent scenarios for the polititrial of 1938; and that, through confrontations with the arrested, persuaded them to sign all the prepared 'testimony' fabricated by investigators. Radek also made the most serious accusations again-Bukharin. In particular, he declared in his final statement of 29 Janu 1937: I admit to being guilty of one other thing: even after hav admitted my crime and exposed the organization, I stubbornly refused make a statement incriminating Bukharin. I knew that Bukhar position was just as hopeless as my own, because our guilt was the sam not juridically, then in essence. But we are close friends, and intellect friendship is stronger than any other form of friendship. I knew » Bukharin found himself in the same shaky position as myself, and I convinced that he would give honest testimony to the Soviet authoris-For this reason, I did not want to lead him bound to the NKVD. As v our other remaining cadres, I wished that he would lay down his ar That is why at the end, when I saw that the trial was approachinunderstood that I could not appear before the court covering up existence of another terrorist organization.'4

⁴ *Ізрыны*, 30 January 1937



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The Harvest Press Limited 2 Stanford Terrace Hassocks, Sussex, England

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posts. On 17 January 1937, Izvestia appeared without Bukharin's name as Editor-in-Chief. Many people therefore thought that Bukharin had already been arrested. But this was not so. He continued to live in his Kremlin flat, under voluntary house arrest. As a candidate member of the Central Committee, he continued to recieve the special Kremlin food rations—of course, he no longer went to the Kremlin dining-hall. And he continued to write letters to Stalin, beginning them as usual, 'Dear Koba'.

The February 1937 Plenum

A Central Committee Plenum was scheduled to take place soon after the end of the Radek-Pyatakov trial in Moscow. As always, members of the Plenum received advance notice of the meeting, due to be held on 19 February. The agenda contained two main items: 1. On N. Bukharin and A. Rykov. 2. On the Preparation of Party organizations for elections to the Supreme Soviet of the ussr. When Bukharin received this notice, he realized that it could only mean Rykov's and his exclusion from the Central Committee and from the Party. At this point, not having—or at least not seeing—any means of struggle, Bukharin decided to go on hunger strike. He stopped taking food, and notified Stalin and maybe other Central Committee members about his action. A few days after the beginning of the hunger strike, Stalin phoned Bukharin: 'Who are you striking against', he asked, 'against the Party?' 'What am I to do', replied Bukharin, 'if you are preparing to throw me out of the Party?' 'No one is planning to throw you out of the Party', said Stalin, and hung up.

On 18 February 1937, Ordzhonikidze committed suicide. His flat was next to Bukharin's, but the entrance was from another doorway. Bukharin had liked Sergo Ordzhonikidze and trusted him. He heard about his death from radio and newspaper reports, and believed the official version: that death was caused by a heart attack. But Bukharin was not able to call at Sergo's flat, nor to participate at his funeral. Because of Ordzhonikidze's funeral, the Plenum was postponed for a week. Two or three days beforehand, Central Committee members received a new agenda, consisting of the following points: 1. On N. Bukharin and A. Rykov. 2. On Bukharin's hunger strike, as an anti-Party action. 3. On the Preparation of Party organizations for elections to the Supreme Soviet of the ussr. When he received the revised agenda, Bukharin was perplexed. He reasoned—first to himself, and then in conversation with his wife that if the agenda included the second point about his hunger strike, it meant that he and Rykov were not in fact to be expelled from the Party. The Central Committee would not discuss the hunger strike of a former member who had just been expelled from the Party. So Bukharin called off his hunger strike.

The Plenum of the Central Committee began on 25 February 1937. Yezhov gave the report on Bukharin and Rykov, as well as on the 'espionage and wrecking activities' of other former oppositionists. Speeches followed from a number of Central Committee members. There is a myth that some Central Committee members defended Bukharin and Rykov, and protested against the mass repression that was already under

Aykov, and definanced that they be brought to justice. During the speeches at the Plenum, many examples were given of 'wrecking activities by former oppositionists in various spheres of the economy and culture. Only Postyshev voiced any doubts, when he queried the correctness of the arrest of one of his closest co-workers, who had neve before participated in any oppositional activity. But Postyshev was at that time himself under attack. (In January 1937 he had been relieved of his responsibilities as First Secretary of the Kiev Regional Committee of the Copy, although he was still Second Secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Party. The Plenum of the Kiev Regional Committee which removed him had been presided over by Kaganovich, who had used slanderous letter by a certain Nikolaenko to smash the former leadershi of the Committee, which was accused of a series of political error bureaucratism and links with 'Trotskyites'.) Molotov spoke particularl sharply against Bukharin and Rykov.

By the time Bukharin was called to speak, the atmosphere had becomfairly tense. He rejected all the accusations levelled against him. When he said, I am not Zinoviev or Kamenev, and I will not tell lies about myself Molotov shouted from his seat: If you don't confess, that will prove your are a fascist hireling, for their press is saying that our trials as provocations. We'll arrest you and you'll confess! 'That's the moustrap!', exclaimed Bukharin, when he got home. He wanted to defer himself from the slanders, but he did not want to 'help' the fascists. At a events, Bukharin read out a statement at the Plenum, on behalf of Rykc and himself, stating that the evidence against them produced by the defendants at the Pyatakov-Radek trial and by other arrested people we entirely slanderous. Bukharin and Rykov accused the NKVD of fabricatin false testimony, and proposed the creation of a commission which wou investigate the NKVD's activities. Well, we'll send you there, and you catake a look for yourself,' shouted Stalin.

So the Plenum established a commission of some thirty members prepare its decision on the case of Bukharin and Rykov. The Plenu meeting was adjourned for the two days during which the commission worked. Bukharin spent those two days at home. He no longer had a hopes. He wrote a letter entitled 'To a Future Generation of Par Leaders', which he asked his wife to memorize, saying 'You are youn and will see the day when other people will be in the Party leadership.' F two days he tested her, until he was sure she would remember it word f word. He wrote in this letter: I depart from life. I lower my head, but n before the proletarian pole-axe, which should be ruthless but also chas I feel my helplessness before a hellish machine which, no doubt by usr mediaeval methods, has acquired gigantic power, fabricates organiz slander, and acts with bold confidence.' Bukharin proceeded to formul: a number of accusations against the NKVD, which had changed into degenerate organization of bureaucrats, without ideas, corrupt, we paid, catering through their foul actions to 'Stalin's mort suspiciousness—I fear to say more'. While rejecting all the accusatic against Rykov, Tomsky and himself, he did not touch on those me against other already sentenced former oppositionists. Stressing

'I appeal to you, future Party leaders, whose historical mission will include the obligation to unravel the monstrous cloud of crimes that is growing ever bigger in these frightful times, taking fire like a flame and suffocating the Party. I appeal to all members of the Partyl In these days, perhaps the last of my life, I am confident that sooner or later the filter of history will inevitably sweep the filth from my head. I was never a traitor; I would unhesitatingly have given my own life for Lenin's; I was devoted to Kirov; I did not organize anything against Stalin. I ask a new, young and honest generation of Party leaders to read my letter at a Party plenum, to exonerate me and to reinstate me in the Party.' Having checked his wife's memory once more, Bukharin burned the letter.

The Commission, which had been instructed by the Plenum to decide on the question of Bukharin and Rykov, met under the chairmanship of Mikoyan. It included almost all the higher Party leaders, many of whom would themselves in the next two years fall victims to a ruthless repression. The decision was taken by a named vote, in alphabetical order. One after another, Central Committee members got up—Andreyev, Bubnov, Voroshilov—and pronounced these words: 'arrest, try, shoot'. When it came to Stalin's turn, he said, 'pass the matter on to the NKVD'. Some who followed him repeated this formulation; but the decision of the majority was 'arrest, try, shoot'. (Only Mikoyan, as chairman, did not express his views, which are thus not recorded in the minutes.)

Arrest and Interrogation

Two days later, the Plenum resumed its work. Bukharin and Rykov were called to the meeting to hear the decisions of the commission. Bukharin did not doubt that his fate had already been decided. He kissed his ninemonth son goodbye. In tears he knelt before his wife and begged her forgiveness. He knew that she would have a difficult time, but had no conception of everything that they would both still have to endure. Regaining control of himself, Bukharin stood up and said: 'Remember, Anna, I am guilty of nothing. Bring up our son to be a true Bolshevik.' The Plenum was being held in the Kremlin, where the Bukharins lived. He just had to cross the courtyard, to get to the room where the meeting was taking place. The cloakroom was empty. Rykov entered it at the same time as Bukharin. As they were taking off their coats, eight men moved forward from the walls and in two groups of four came up to Bukharin and Rykov. This was the arrest. From the Central Committee building, Bukharin and Rykov were taken to the Lubyanka.

Simultaneously, NEVD men arrived to search Bukharin's flat. Bukharin's wife understood then that she would never see her husband again. The search took 2 long time. Bukharin's library was barely touched, but all his notebooks and his entire archives were confiscated and taken away. These archives contained many valuable documents, including a considerable

In the Russian alphabet, V comes immediately after B. (Trans.)

death the Central Committee set up the Lenin Institute, and appealed all Party members to hand over to it any letters, writings or oth documents either composed by Lenin or linked to his activity. At it time, Bukharin submitted many Lenin manuscripts to the curators of it new institute; but he retained quite a few letters and writings of a person character.) Although the search took a long time, it was comparative civil. Members of Bukharin's family were not arrested. At the tim besides his wife, son and son's nanny, Bukharin's father lived in the flathe had been a primary-school teacher, but was now gravely ill and near the death.

For five days after this, Bukharin's wife did not leave the flat. But it w necessary at least to take the child for a walk, so Anna Mikhailovna aga began to push her son's pram around the Kremlin. Nobody came up her, and nobody asked her any questions. After a time, she w telephoned and asked why she was not coming to get her rations. 'Whrations?' 'You are entitled to rations.' This referred to Niko' Ivanovich's rations. Anna Mikhailovna decided this must be a mistake, she did not go. But the nanny was then summoned, and given food bring back. They stopped refusing. Bukharin had not kept any reser supplies, and after his arrest his family soon had neither money nor foc

Perhaps a month after Bukharin's arrest, an NKVD man brought a letfrom him asking his wife to send him certain books and materials. wrote that he had begun to work on a book entitled 'Cultu Degradation Under Fascism', for which all this material was necessa But Larina was not able to comply, because Bukharin's office was seal up. Soon after this, the head of the investigating team telephoned Larto say that the office would be unsealed so that the relevant books covbe fetched. He asked her to bring them to him in the Lubyanka. An-Mikhailovna brought food in addition to the books, but the investigan would not take this, saying: 'We feed your husband very well. It see he's got a sweet tooth—we give him six lumps of sugar for every cup tea.' He went on: 'Your husband asks you to write him a note, and to se a picture of yourself and your son.' Anna Mikhailovna started to write > note, but the investigator began to dictate what she could—or rathwhat she should—write. Write that you are continuing to live in > Kremlin flat as before, and that you receive rations.' I will not write the replied Larina, sensing some kind of trick. I will refuse to write, rath than write what they want,' she decided. After an argument, ' investigator refused to take Larina's note, since it did not contain dictated words. The point was, during that week the main line argument being used by his interrogators was designed to convi-Bukharin that if he gave the testimony that was required, then his w son and other relatives would be shown mercy. If he did not give testimony, however, their fate would be different. This was obviblackmail, but it was still difficult for Bukharin to resist such pressure is not known whether the investigators resorted to torture in Bukhari case, though it seems certain that Rykov was tortured quite brutally: la on at the trial, if Bukharin replied to questions evasively Ryl duly 'corrected' him.

arrests which swept the whole country and began to enguir other CC members, the Bukharın family continued to live in the Kremlin. But this life became unbearable, since no one wished to associate with the family of so prominent an 'enemy of the people'. Laring therefore requested that she be assigned a new flat. A few days later, she was allotted a five-room flat in the 'house on the embankment'—a government residence not far from the Kremlin, on the opposite bank of the Moscow River. At that time, flats were continually being cleared and the building stood halfempty. After a month, Larina received a bill for rent and services on her flat. It came to about 300 roubles, which was a lot of money. She sent the bill on to Kalinin, with a short note: 'Unfortunately, the Gestapo spy Bukharın was paid very little for his services, and we do not have the amount of money required to pay for this flat.' On receipt of this note, Kalinin gave orders that no money was to be collected for rent from the Bukharin family. Almost a year passed in this way, until March 1938. People from the 'house on the embankment' disappeared practically every night. Moreover, once the head of a family was arrested, so too were his wife, adult children and other relatives. But Bukharin's family was not touched until the start of the last of the great trials, which began on 2 March 1938, and at which Bukharin himself was the most prominent defendant.

The Great Trial

This was the most 'important' of the trials. It seemed to consummate all the previous trials, exposing 'the most secret' of all the 'anti-Soviet centres'. In the dock beside Bukharin sat Rykov, who for many years had presided over the Council of People's Commissars, and Yagoda, former People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, who until recently had been the all-powerful head of the Cheka and organizer of the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial. The defendants also included other former People's Commissars, together with a number of Party leaders from Uzbekistan and Belorussia. Lastly, there were two doctors who—along with his secretary Kryuchkov—were being charged with the premeditated murder of Maxim Gorky. The judicial hearing was conducted by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, and took place in the October Hall (not the columned auditorium, as many have believed) of the Trade Union House. The hall seated approximately 500 people. The first five rows were occupied by NKVD officers. Behind them sat representatives of the public, interspersed with others unknown to them, who were probably also from the NKVD. I have not put the words representatives of the public in quotation marks, because these were people who did truly represent certain circles of Soviet society. Most of them obtained a pass to the trial for one day, to see how 'the enemies of the people' would 'repent'. The trial was attended, for example, by Ilya Ehrenburg on the first day, by a famous Moscow artist on the second day and so on. Some of these people described their impressions in newspapers.

First the members of the Military Collegium—Ulrikh, the President, Matulevich and Yevlev—came out and took their places, together with court secretary Batner. Then the State Prosecutor, Vyshinsky, and the group of guards came on to the 'scene': in front of each defendant, unde the pretext of guarding his safety, sat his investigator—i.e. the NKVI officer in charge of his case, who had 'prepared' him for this las performance. Special boxes were set aside for representatives of the foreign press. An important guest at the trial was the us ambassado Joseph Davies, who was a special envoy from President Roosevelt Davies did not know Russian, so the American correspondent Shapin translated for him. In spite of this, they came to differing conclusion about the trial: Shapiro saw it as judicial play-acting and a fake, wherea Davies was convinced that Stalin had destroyed the fifth column in th USSR. He wrote about this in letters from Moscow to his daughter, and later in a book entitled Mission to Moscow. Finally, the defendants wer brought in and placed in the dock, behind a barrier. Their appearance differed. Khodzhayev wore a smart suit, which looked as if it had jus been cut. Ikramov seemed to be going to pieces, and was dressed untidily Yagoda looked like a great, beaten wolf. Bukharin was concentrating and very pale.

After some procedural questions had been resolved, the court secretar read out the long indictment, based on evidence from the preliminar investigations. Then the trial itself began, with the interrogation of th defendant Bessonov. Bessonov's role, both in the organization of the tru and in the actual 'scenario', was especially significant. For according t the script, it was precisely he who had allegedly acted as a link between th Trotskyists and Zinovievites and the 'Rights', Bukharin, Rykov an Tomsky. While working in the Soviet trade delegation in Berlin, he ha supposedly arranged meetings of oppositionists with Trotsky and his so Sedov, passed on instructions, and so on. It would be hard to condem Bessonov for playing this role in the trial, for he did not accept it readil or immediately. He was subjected to the most refined forms of torture. H endured 'the conveyor' without sleep for seventeen days, whereas man others did not last more than four or five.7 He was continually beater But, as in many other cases after a long period of initial resistance, once h broke down and signed the false statements Bessonov no longer had th strength for any further resistance, but became an obedient tool in th hands of the trial organizers.

A Hitch in the Proceedings

As each defendant was cross-examined, individual questions were put to their defendants, for confirmation. When Bessonov spoke about hefforts to build up links between the Trotskyists and Zinovievites and the Rightists, Vyshinsky turned to Bukharin: could he confirm Bessonov testimony? Bukharin confirmed that discussions with Pyatakov and othe Trotskyists had taken place, even before the meeting with Bessono You had discussions about united actions against Soviet power?', aske

There is an untranslateable pun here, since the word rendered here as 'guard' etymologically identical to the name of the NKVD's predecessor, the Taurist Okhrus (Trans.)

[&]quot;The Conveyor' was the basic NEVD system used to interrogate and break prisoners. involved continuous questioning by relays of police, for days on end, without slex (Trans.)

session, there occurred an event which in the context of such a trial can only be described as extraordinary. When Vyshinsky turned to the defendant Nikolai Krestinsky to confirm a series of statements made by Bessonov, Krestinsky denied them all. A prominent Party and State figure, Krestinsky had worked until his arrest as Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. He had not been a Trotskyist or taken part in the inner-Party struggles of the twenties, if only because throughout those years (1921-30) he had been Soviet ambassador in Germany.8 During the pre-trial interrogation he had quickly agreed to the investigator's version, and signed all the statements he was asked to sign. But it turned out he had decided, realizing that a new political trial was being prepared, to save his strength and tell the truth at the trial itself. Now sharply—even shrilly—and loudly, Krestinsky declared that he had never on any occasion discussed Trotskyist matters with Bessonov; that he had never in fact been a Trotskyist; that Bessonov was lying to the court. When the dismayed Vyshinsky reminded him of the statements he had made during the preliminary investigation, he replied that these were all lies. Why didn't you speak the truth at the preliminary investigation?', demanded Vyshinsky. Krestinsky hesitated with his answer, and Vyshinsky hastily ended the interrogation with the words: 'I don't hear any answers and have no more questions.'

Vyshinsky now once again began to interrogate Bessonov, evidently in order to make it possible for the investigator who sat next to Krestinsky to warn him of the consequences he was risking. Nevertheless, when some time later Vyshinsky turned back to Krestinsky, the latter again rejected all Bessonov's evidence and declared that his entire testimony at the preliminary investigation had been false. He explained that he had not been able to tell the truth, since he was convinced that before the trial, if it was to take place' he would not be allowed to repudiate any false evidence against him. 'Why did you mislead the investigation and the Prosecutor?', asked Vyshinsky. I just thought', replied Krestinsky, 'that if I had said what I am saying today—namely, that all this does not correspond to reality—then my testimony would never have reached the leaders of the Party and the government.' After a few more questions to Bessonov, Vyshinsky declared a two-hour recess.

Krestinsky's new testimony quickly reached Party and government leaders. In the first place, on the stage, not far from the defendants, a secret microphone had been installed so that Stalin could listen from his office to all the evidence. Moreover, at the end of the hall there was a high-sided balcony, which concealed all but the head of anyone standing on it—and hid a sitting person altogether. Sometimes tobacco-smoke would be seen rising from this balcony, and several of the trial organizers were convinced that Stalin had come to spend an hour or two looking at his recent colleagues and opponents. During the recess, the entire 'staff' met

At another point in the trial proceedings, Krestinsky in fact stated that he had written a letter to Trotaky in November 1927 breaking off relations with him. Prior to this, he had been close to the Left Opposition, without as ambassador in Berlin being directly involved in the inner-party struggle. For another—significantly different—account of Krestinsky's trial, see Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror* (revised paperback edition), London 1971, pp 497–521. (Trans.)

big performance, with an impresario and a whole team of helpers. Comfortable premises had been arranged for this staff well in advance; they were right beneath the October Hall, with a carefully hidden and well-guarded entrance known only to the initiated. In charge of the staff was an old Chekist called Zakovsky, who had started to work in the secret police under Dzerzhinsky and then Menzhinsky, who had risen higher under Yagoda, and who had kept his position under Yezhov—who needed such 'specialists'. It is not known how the incident with Krestinsky was viewed by the production staff. At all events, after the recess Vyshinsky moved on to the interrogation of defendant Rosengoltz and Grinko, who before their arrest had held positions in the People's Commissariat for External Trade and Finance. They gave the court all the 'required' evidence, including some apparently incriminating Krestinsky. Nevertheless, the latter again denied everything and insisted on his innocence.

Thus the first day of the trial was not very successful for the organizers However, when the next session began the Prosecutor did not go or interrogating Krestinsky, and when the latter's cross-examination war resumed at a later stage, he admitted all the crimes of which he wa accused and confirmed all the false evidence 'he' had given at the preliminary investigation. But this was already another Krestinsky. Fo there were people present at the trial who knew the defendants well, and could not make any mistake about their identity; and one such person telling me about the trial, said: 'On the first day of the trial, the res Krestinsky was in the dock, alongside Bukharin, Grinko, Yagoda and others whom I had earlier known well. But on the last day, although ther was a man sitting in the dock who looked like Krestinsky, I could no vouch that it was really him. This was the only time in the trial when doubted the identity of a defendant.' It seems likely that Krestinsky wa in fact replaced by a well made-up actor. Perhaps for this performance just as in the real theatre, if a role needed to be filled unexpectedly, ther was an understudy already waiting—or one was quickly found.

Bukharin in the Dock

Bukharin's testimony was also not completely normal, or in any case gave food for thought. What he said seems open to interpretation at two level For the ordinary citizen of the country, the evidence he gave cast him an enemy of Stalin and of Soviet power. But the thoughtful examiner and enemy of Stalin and of Soviet power. But the thoughtful examiner and Bukharin's statements would have detected a scattered multitude of hint which cast doubt upon the entire version presented by the court an investigation. While admitting his adherence to the counter revolutionary organization of the 'Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites', he the same time pointed out that this organization had not been ful conscious of its objectives—had never really dotted the I's or crossed the T's. Bukharin vigorously denied any direct participation in espionage and any complicity in the assassinations of Kirov, Kuibyshev, Gorky and Menzhinsky or in the 1918 attempt on Lenin's life. In reply to Vyshinsk he stated unambiguously that 'the confession of the accused is no binding; the confession of the accused is a mediaeval principle of

Although under cross-examination Bukharin agreed in the main with the prosecution's version, he would almost always make reservations which threw the Prosecutor and court into confusion. At one session, the President of the Military Collegium, Ulrikh, could not contain himself and said to Bukharin: 'While you go on beating about the bush, you say nothing about crimes.' During another round of questioning, Prosecutor Vyshinsky, equally incensed, told Bukharin: 'You are obviously sticking to a certain tactic and don't want to speak the truth, hiding behind a flood of words and legal quibbles, making digressions into the sphere of politics, philosophy, theory and so on; well you might as well give this up once and for all, because you are charged with espionage, and all the evidence uncovered by the investigation clearly shows that you are a spy for some intelligence service. So stop your pettifogging!' Soviet newspapers too wrote during the trial that Bukharin was sticking to certain tactics; that by using pseudo-scientific phrases he was seeking to obscure the charges, conceal the truth and shield himself. In sweeping terms he claims to be guilty of everything, but deflects any concrete accusions away from himself."9

At the morning session on 11 March 1938, Vyshinsky made his final speech for the prosecution. Almost a third of it was devoted to the charges against Bukharin. He demanded the death sentence for Bukharin and for most of the other defendants. The evening session on that day and the entire proceedings on the next were taken up with the speeches of the defence lawyers Braude and Kommodov—speeches which were not very different from that of the Prosecution—and with the final statements of the defendants. These sessions too were not free from unexpected incidents. For instance, Rosengoltz, a former People's Commissar for External Trade, first admitted to the court that he was guilty of sabotage, spying and stealing State funds to help Trotskyist activity, and even of planning-along with Tukhachevsky, Uborevich and Yakir-the military overthrow of Soviet power. However, he then unexpectedly began to speak about his services in the October Revolution and the Civil War: he had raised the first army unit for the insurrection in Moscow, and subsequently carried out highly complicated instructions from the Party in the most difficult areas of the Civil War.

Vyshinsky had demanded the death sentence for Rosengoltz, and the latter declared that he was not requesting leniency, for he deserved a harsh sentence. But that does not mean', he said, 'that it is not painful for me to leave my lovely Soviet land. At present we can see a great new development, a new generation, educated by the Bolshevik Party. We have achievements in the Soviet Union such as are to be found nowhere else in the world. The pain of parting is intensified by the fact that we have already achieved real results in socialist construction. For the first time we have a full-blooded life, sparkling with happiness and colour.' And with these words, Rosengoltz unexpectedly began to sing the song by Dunayevsky and Lebedev-Kumach: 'A broad country my nation/With

Igustus, 9 March 1938.

one can breathe so freely...' Most of those present—whether Cheki or invited members of the public—jumped up from their seats, r knowing what to do. However, Rosengoltz did not finish the song, t sat down sobbing

Yagoda, for his part, made only a short final speech. He continued to de that he belonged to the leading centre of the 'Bloc' or that he h organized Kirov's assassination, although he did 'admit' other crim But then, at the end, he suddenly walked up to the secret micropho which only he among all the defendants knew about, and in a falteri voice said: 'Comrade Stalin, comrades of the Cheka, show mercy if yean!'

Even in his final speech, Bukharin stuck to his adopted tactics. He sathat he was a leader of the 'Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites'—but the added that as a leader he did not know and could not have known to concrete actions of that bloc. He decisively rejected the allegation that could at any time have given instructions for acts of sabotage, for opening up the front during a war, or for the organization of espionage. In a leadefinite form, he denied wishing to see the break-up of the USSR. He mic categorically repudiated any complicity in the assassinations of Kirc Gorky, Menzhinsky, Kuibyshev and Maxim Peshkov. He admitted on his 'political and legal responsibility' for all the crimes of the 'Bloc Rights and Trotskyites', in which, he said, 'the main driving force' w Trotsky. Bukharin did not request mercy.

Late in the evening of 12 March, the court retired to reach its verdict. took six hours. At 4 a.m. on 13 March the session was resumed, and t' weary audience, the guards and the defendants took their places. Outsic the Trade Union House, Moscow was deserted. There is a myth th thousands of Moscovites stood outside the court building, waiting hear the sentence—but this has no basis in fact. It took about thir minutes for the President of the court to read out the sentence, durir which time the defendants remained standing. Eighteen of the accusedincluding Bukharin, Rykov, Yagoda, Krestinsky, Rosengoltz, Ivano Chernov, Grinko, Zelensky, Ikramov and Khodzhayev-were sentence to 'the maximum sentence: execution by firing squad, with confiscatic of all personal belongings'. The doctor Pletney was sentenced to twent five years' imprisonment; Rakovsky and Bessonov to twenty and fiftee years respectively. During the night of 15 March Bukharin, whom Len had rightly called 'the favourite of the Party', and his comrades. misfortune were shot. This happened forty years ago. It was one of thoterrible crimes committed by Stalin before the Soviet nation, before th Party, before the communist movement of the entire world-crime which cannot and will never be forgotten.

Postcript

Since that day—or more correctly, since that night—when Bukharin we shot, forty years have passed. It is impossible to enumerate all that he happened during those years that (albeit indirectly) has had a connection with the 'Bukharin case'. Immediately after the trial, Anna Mikhailovr

exile. Bukharin's son Yuri was brought up by Larina's sister, who nved in the Urals. For some twenty years he did not know who his mother and father were. Today Larina and Yuri live in Moscow, and for many years they have been trying—so far unsuccessfully—to achieve Bukharin's official rehabilitation. In essence, the whole political trial of 1938 was exposed long ago even in the Soviet press. Of the defendants there, Krestinsky, Ivanov, Chernov, Grinko, Zelensky, Ikramov, Khodzhayev and several others have been fully rehabilitated. From the platform of the all-Union Conference of Historians in 1964, the Central Committee Secretary Pospelov said, in reply to a question, that neither Bukharin nor Rykov were spies or wreckers. But contrary to all logic, neither Bukharin nor Rykov have been rehabilitated to this day, either by a state or a Party edict; nor has their sentence, pronounced on 13 March 1938, been formally cancelled.

Vyshinsky concluded his final speech for the prosecution at the trial, with these words: 'Time will pass. The graves of the hateful traitors will grow over with weeds and thistles, covered in eternal contempt by honest people and by the whole Soviet nation . . . Over the road cleared of the last scum and filth of the past we, our people, with our beloved leader and teacher the great Stalin at our head, will march on as before.' Vyshinsky was wrong about many things. Neither Bukharin, nor most of the other defendants at that trial, have been forgotten by the Soviet people. Neither is Bukharin forgotten as a leader of the October Revolution and the international communist movement. Several large books and many articles have been published about him in Europe and the United States. For the majority of western communists, Bukharın already does not require rehabilitation. But the Soviet people does not really know Bukharin, once one of the most popular leaders and theoreticians of the Revolution. They cannot read his books or articles. Even in the new Complete Soviet Encyclopaedia, Bukharin's name is not mentioned. So something of what Vyshinsky said has—so far—proved to be correct. And today, when more than twenty years have passed since the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and seventeen since the Twenty-second, and when the whole world knows about the monstrous crimes of Stalin, among which the execution of Bukharin is plainly to be numbered, we do not even know where that outstanding theoretician and Party leader lies buried. But we do know the buriel spot of his prosecutor, Vyshinskyone of the most evil figures in Stalin's era. His remains rest near the Kremlin wall not far from the Lenin Mausoleum; and it is as if the monument on his grave is a reminder that, in our country, not all the evils of Stalinism are buried in the past.

Translated by Helen Jamieson

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AGENDA PUBLISHING COMPANY 1228 TELEGRAPH AVENUE OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94609

NAME	
ADDRESS	
Сіту	STATE/ZIP
☐ Subscription (6 issues) \$12	☐ Foreign subscription \$13
Back issues: through no. 34,5 no. 35 and after, \$2.50 (list by	
110. 3) and after, \$2.50 (fist by	1441110C1)

Poulauzro

Towards a Democratic Socialism

he question of socialism and democracy, of the democratic road to socialism, is day posed with reference to two historical experiences, which in a way serve as amples of the twin limits or dangers to be avoided: the traditional social-mocratic experience, as illustrated in a number of West European countries, id the Eastern example of what is called 'real socialism'. Despite everything that stinguishes these cases, despite everything that opposes social democracy and alinism to each other as theoretico-political currents, they nevertheless exhibit a ndamental complicity: both are marked by statism and profound distrust of ass initiatives, in short by suspicion of democratic demands. In France, many we like to speak of two traditions of the working-class and popular movements: e statist and Jacobin one, running from Lenin and the October Revolution to e Third International and the Communist movement; and a second one aracterized by notions of self-management and direct, rank-and-file democracy, is then argued that the achievement of democratic socialism requires a break the former and integration with the latter. In fact, however, this is a rather

traditions, they do not coincide with the currents just mentioned Moreover, it would be a fundamental error to imagine that mer integration with the current of self-management and direct democracy i sufficient to avoid statism.

The Leninist Legacy and Luxemburg's Critique

First of all, then, we must take yet another look at Lenin and the Octobe Revolution. Of course, Stalinism and the model of the transition to socialism bequeathed by the Third International differ from Lenin's own thought and action. But they are not simply a deviation from the latter Seeds of Stalinism were well and truly present in Lenin—and not onlibecause of the peculiarities of Russia and the Tsarist state with which had to grapple. The error of the Third International cannot be explaine simply as an attempt to universalize in an aberrant manner a model c socialism that corresponded, in its original purety, to the concret situation of Tsarist Russia. At the same time, these seeds are not to b found in Marx himself. Lenin was the first to tackle the problem of the transition to socialism and the withering away of the State, concerning which Marx left only a few general observations on the close relationship between socialism and democracy.

What then was the exact import of the October Revolution for th withering away of the State? Out of the several problems relating to th seeds of the Third International in Lenin, one seems here to occupy dominant position. For all Lenin's analyses and actions are traversed be the following lattmotif: the State must be entirely destroyed throug frontal attack in a situation of dual power, to be replaced by a secon power—soviets—which will no longer be a State in the proper sense of the term, since it will already have begun to wither away. What doe Lenin mean by this destruction of the bourgeois State? Unlike Marx, he often reduces the institutions of representative democracy and political freedoms to a simple emanation of the bourgeoisie: representative democracy = bourgeois democracy = dictatorship of the bourgeoisis. They have to be completely uprooted and replaced by direct, rank-and file democracy and mandated, recallable delegates—in other words, be the genuine proletarian democracy of soviets.

I am intentionally drawing a highly schematized picture: Lenin principal thrust was not at first towards a variant of authoritarian statisn I say this not in order to leap to Lenin's defence, but to point up the simplistic and befogging character of that conception according to whice developments in Soviet Russia resulted from Lenin's 'centralis' opposition to direct democracy—from a Leninism which is supposed thave carried within it the crushing of the Kronstadt sailors' revolt, in the way that a cloud carries the storm. Whether we like it or not, the origin guiding thread of Lenin's thought was, in opposition to the parliamentarianism and dread of workers' councils characteristic of the social-democratic current, the sweeping replacement of 'forms' representative democracy by the 'real', direct democracy of worker councils. (The term 'self-management' was not yet used in Lenin's time. This leads me on to the real question. Was it not this very line (sweeping).

which principally accounted for what happened in Lenin's lifetime in the Soviet Union, and which gave rise to the centralizing and statist Lenin whose posterity is well enough known.

I said that I am posing the question. But as a matter of fact, it was already posed in Lenin's time and answered in a way that now seems dramatically premonitory. I am referring, of course, to Rosa Luxemburg, whom Lenin called an eagle of revolution. She also had the eye of an eagle. For it was she who made the first correct and fundamental critique of Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution. It is decisive because it issues not from the ranks of social democracy, which did not want even to hear of direct democracy and workers' councils, but precisely from a convinced fighter who gave her life for council democracy, being executed at the moment when the German workers' councils were crushed by social democracy.

Now, Luxemburg reproaches Lenin not with neglect or contempt of direct, rank-and-file democracy, but rather with the exact opposits—that is to say, exclusive reliance on council democracy and complete elimination of representative democracy (through, among other things, dissolution of the Constituent Assembly—which had been elected under the Bolshevik government—in favour of the soviets alone). It is necessary to re-read The Russian Revolution, from which I shall quote just one passage. In place of the representative bodies created by general, popular elections, Lenin and Trotsky have laid down the soviets as the only true representation of the labouring masses. But with the repression of political life in the land as a whole, life in the soviets must also become more and more crippled. Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which only the bureaucracy remains as the active element."

This is certainly not the only question to be asked concerning Lenin. An important role in subsequent developments was played by the conception of the Party contained in What is to be Done?; by the notion of theory being brought to the working class from outside by professional revolutionaries, and so on. But the fundamental question is the one posed by Luxemburg. Even if we take into account Lenin's positions on a series of other problems, as well as the historical peculiarities of Russia, what ensued in Lenin's own lifetime and above all after his death (the single Party, bureaucratization of the Party, confusion of Party and State, statism, the end of the soviets themselves, etc.) was already inscribed in the situation criticized by Luxemburg.

The Third-International Model

Be that as it may, let us now look at the 'model' of revolution that was bequeathed by the Third International, having already been affected by Stalinism in certain ways. We find the same position with regard to representative democracy, only now it is combined with statism and contempt for direct, rank-and-file democracy—in short, the meaning of

¹ Mary-Alice Waters (ed.), Rasa Luxemburg Speaks, New York 1970, p 391.

model is permeated by the instrumental conception of the State. I capitalist State is still considered as a mere object or instrument, capa of being manipulated by the bourgeoisie of which it is the emanatic According to this view of things, the State is not traversed by intericontradictions, but is a monolithic bloc without cracks of any kind. I struggles of the popular masses cannot pass through the State, any me than they can become, in opposition to the bourgeoisie, one of t constituent factors of the institutions of representative democracy. Clicontradictions are located between the State and the popular mass standing outside the State. This remains true right up to the crisis of dipower, when the State is effectively dismantled through the centralizati at national level of a parallel power, which becomes the real pow (soviets). Thus:

- 1. The struggle of the popular masses for state power 15, in essence frontal struggle of manoeuvre or encirclement, taking place outside t fortress-state and principally aiming at the creation of a situation of dipower.
- 2. While it would be hasty to identify this conception with an assau strategy concentrated in a precise moment or 'big day' (insurrectic political general strike, etc.), it quite clearly lacks the strategic vision o process of transition to socialism—that is, of a long stage during which t masses will act to conquer power and transform the state apparatuses. presents these changes as possible only in a situation of dual power characterized by a highly precarious balance of forces between t State/bourgeoisie and the soviets/working class. The 'revolutiona situation' is itself reduced to a crisis of the State that cannot but involve breakdown.
- 3. The State is supposed to hold pure power—a quantifiable substant that has to be seized from it. 'To take' state power therefore means occupy, during the interval of dual power, all the parts of the instrumer State: to take charge of the summit of its apparatuses, assuming t commanding positions within the state machinery and operating controls in such a way as to replace it by the second, soviet power. citadel can be taken only if, during the dual power situation, ditch ramparts and casemates of its instrumental structure have already be captured and dismantled in favour of something else (soviets); and the something else (the second power) is supposed to lie entirely outside the fortified position of the State. This conception, then, is still marked be permanent scepticism as to the possibility of mass intervention within the State itself.
- 4. How does the transformation of the state apparatus appear during t transition to socialism? It is first of all necessary to take state power, at then, after the fortress has been captured, to raze to the ground the enti state apparatus, replacing it by the second power (soviets) constituted as State of a new type.

Here we can recognize a basic distrust of the institutions of representative mocracy and of political freedoms. But if these are still regarded

has in the meantime undergone significant changes. what is to replace the bourgeois State an blow is no longer direct, rank-and-file democracy. The soviets are now not so much an anti-State as a parallel State—one copied from the instrumental model of the existing State, and possessing a proletarian character in so far as its summit is controlled/occupied by a 'single' revolutionary party which itself functions according to the model of the State. Distrust of the possibility of mass intervention within the bourgeois State has become distrust of the popular movement as such. This is called strengthening the State/soviets, the better to make it wither away in the future... And so was Stalinist statism born.

We can now see the deep complicity between this Stalinist kind of statism and that of traditional social democracy. For the latter is also characterized by basic distrust of direct, rank-and-file democracy and popular initiative. For it too, the popular masses stand in a relationship of externality to a State that possesses power and constitutes an essence. Here the State is a subject, bearing an intrinsic rationality that is incarnated by political élites and the very mechanism of representative democracy. Accordingly, occupation of the State involves replacing the top leaders by an enlightened left élite and, if necessary, making a few adjustments to the way in which the existing institutions function; it is left as understood that the State will thereby bring socialism to the popular masses from above. This then is the techno-bareaucratic statism of the experts.

Stalinist state-worship, social-democratic state-worship: this is indeed one of the traditions of the popular movement. But to escape from it through the other tradition of direct, rank-and-file democracy or selfmanagement would really be too good to be true. We should not forget the case of Lenin himself and the seeds of statism contained in the original workers' councils experience. The basic dilemma from which we must extricate ourselves is the following: either maintain the existing State and stick exclusively to a modified form of representative democracy—a road that ends up in social-democratic statism and so-called liberal parliamentarianism; or base everything on direct, rank-and-file democracy or the movement for self-management-2 path which, sooner or later, inevitably leads to statist despotism or the dictatorship of experts. The essential problem of the democratic road to socialism, of democratic socialism, must be posed in a different way: bow is it possible radically to transform the State in such a manner that the extension and deepening of political freedoms and the institutions of representative democracy (which were also a conquest of the popular masses) are combined with the unfurling of forms of direct democracy and the mushrooming of self-management bodies?

Not only did the notion of dictatorship of the proletanat fail to pose this problem; it ended by obscuring it. For Marx, the dictatorship of the proletanat was a notion of applied strategy, serving at most as a signpost. It referred to the class nature of the State and to the necessity of its transformation in the transition to socialism and the process of withering away of the State. Now, although the object to which it referred is still real, the notion has come to play a precise historical role: it obscures the fundamental problem of combining a transformed representative

and not because the notion eventually became identified with Stalinisi totalitarianism, that its abandonment is, in my opinion, justified. Ever when it took on other meanings, it always retained the historical function in question—both for Lenin, at the beginning of the October Revolution, and, nearer our own time, for Gramsci himself.

Of course, there is no disputing Gramsci's considerable theoretical political contributions, and we know the distance he took from the Stalinist experience. Still, even though he is currently being pulled and pushed in every conceivable direction, the fact remains that Gramsci wa also unable to pose the problem in all its amplitude. His famous analyse of the differences between war of movement (as waged by the Bolshevik in Russia) and war of position are essentially conceived as the application of Lenin's model/strategy to the 'different concrete conditions' of th West. Despite his remarkable insights, this leads him into a number c blind alleys, which we do not have space to discuss here.

The Democratic Socialist Imperative

This then is the basic problem of democratic socialism. It does no concern only the so-called developed countries, for there is no strategi model exclusively adapted to these countries. In fact, there is no longer question of building 'models' of any kind whatsoever. All that is involve is a set of signposts which, drawing on the lessons of the past, point of the traps to anyone wishing to avoid certain well-known destination. The problem concerns every transition to socialism, even though it mapresent itself quite differently in various countries. This much we know already: socialism cannot be democratic here and of another kind ove there. The concrete situation may of course differ, and the strategic undoubtedly have to be adapted to the country's specific features. By democratic socialism is the only kind possible.

With regard to this socialism, to the democratic road to socialism, the current situation in Europe presents a number of peculiarities: the concern at one and the same time the new social relations, the state for that is being established, and the precise character of the crisis of the State For certain European countries, these particularities constitute so mar chances—probably unique in world history—for the success of democratic socialist experience, articulating transformed representative democracy and direct, rank-and-file democracy. This entails the elaboration of a new strategy with respect both to the capture of state power by the popular masses and their organizations, and to the transformations of the State designated by the term 'democratic road socialism'.

Today less than ever is the State an ivory tower isolated from the popul masses. Their struggles constantly traverse the State, even when they a not physically present in its apparatuses. Dual power, in which from struggle is concentrated in a precise moment, is not the only situation th allows the popular masses to carry out an action in the sphere of the State The democratic road to socialism is a long process, in which the strugg of the popular masses does not seek to create an effective dual pow

contradictions of the State. To be sure, the seizure of power always presupposes a crisis of the State (such as exists today in certain European countries); but this crisis, which sharpens the very internal contradictions of the State, cannot be reduced to a breakdown of the latter. To take or capture state power is not simply to lay hands on part of the state machinery in order to replace it with a second power. Power is not a quantifiable substance held by the State that must be taken out of its hands, but rather a series of relations among the various social classes. In its ideal form, power is concentrated in the State, which is thus itself the condensation of a particular class relationship of forces. The State is neither a thing-instrument that may be taken away, nor a fortress that may be penetrated by means of a wooden horse, nor yet a safe that may be cracked by burglary: it is the heart of the exercise of political power.

For state power to be taken, a mass struggle must have unfolded in such a way as to modify the relationship of forces within the state apparatuses, themselves the strategic site of political struggle. For a dual-power type of strategy, however, the decisive shift in the relationship of forces takes place not within the State but between the State and the masses outside. In the democratic road to socialism, the long process of taking power essentially consists in the spreading, development, reinforcement, coordination and direction of those diffuse centres of resistance which the masses always possess within the state networks, in such a way that they become the real centres of power on the strategic terrain of the State. It is therefore not a question of a straight choice between frontal war of movement and war of position, because in Gramsci's use of the term, the latter always comprises encirclement of a fortress State.

I can already hear the question: have we then given in to traditional reformism? In order to answer this, we must examine how the question of reformism was posed by the Third International. As a matter of fact, it regarded every strategy other than that of dual power as reformist. The only radical break allowing the seizure of state power, the only meaningful break making it possible to escape from reformism was the break between the State (as a simple instrument of the bourgeoisie external to the masses) and a second power (the masses/soviets) lying wholly outside the State. By the way, this did not prevent the emergence of a reformism peculiar to the Third International—one bound up precisely with the instrumental conception of the State. Quite the contrary! You corner some loose parts of the state machinery and collect a few isolated bastions while awaiting a dual power situation. Then, as time passes, dual power goes by the board: all that remains is the instrument-State which you capture cog by cog or whose command posts you take over.

Now, reformism is an ever-latent danger, not a vice inherent in any strategy other than that of dual power—even if, in the case of a democratic road to socialism, the criterion of reformism is not as sharp as in the dual-power strategy, and even if (there is no point in denying it) the risks of social-democratization are thereby increased. At any event, to shift the relationship of forces within the State does not mean to win successive reforms in an unbroken chain, to conquer the state machinery

denotes nothing other than a stage of real breaks, the climax of which—and there has to be one—is reached when the relationship of forces on the strategic terrain of the State swings over to the side of the popular masses

The State as a Battleground

This democratic road to socialism is therefore not simply a parliamentar or electoral road. Waiting for an electoral majority (in parliament or for presidential candidate) can be only a moment, however important tha may be; and its achievement is not necessarily the climax of breaks within the State. The shift in the relationship of forces within the State touche its apparatuses and mechanisms as a whole; it does not affect onl parliament or, as is so often repeated nowadays, the ideological stat apparatuses that are supposed to play the determining role in th 'contemporary' State. The process extends also, and above all, to th repressive state apparatuses that hold the monopoly of legitimate physica violence: especially the army and the police. But just as we should no forget the particular role of these apparatuses (as is frequently done b versions of the democratic road that are founded on a misinterpretation ç some of Gramsci's theses), so we should not imagine that the strategy c modifying the relationship of forces within the State is valid only for th ideological apparatuses, and that the repressive apparatuses, completel isolated from popular struggle, can be taken only by frontal, extern attack. In short, we cannot add together two strategies, retaining th dual-power perspective in relation to the repressive apparatuse Obviously, a shift in the balance of forces within the repressiv apparatuses poses special, and therefore formidable, problems. But as th case of Portugal showed with perfect clarity, these apparatuses as themselves traversed by the struggles of the popular masses.

Furthermore, the real alternative raised by the democratic road socialism is indeed that of a struggle of the popular masses to modify tl relationship of forces within the State, as opposed to a frontal, dus power type of strategy. The choice is not, as is often thought, between struggle 'within' the state apparatuses (that is, physically invested at inserted in their material space) and a struggle located at a certain physic distance from these apparatuses. First, because any struggle at a distan always has effects within the State: it is always there, even if only in refracted manner and through intermediaries. Secondly, and mc importantly, because struggle at a distance from the state apparatuse whether within or beyond the limits of the physical space traced by t institutional loci, remains necessary at all times and in every case, since reflects the autonomy of the struggles and organizations of the popul masses. It is not simply a matter of entering state institutions (parliames economic and social councils, 'planning' bodies, etc.) in order to use the characteristic levers for a good purpose. In addition, struggle mi always express itself in the development of popular movements, t mushrooming of democratic organs at the base, and the rise of centres self-management.

It should not be forgotten that the above points refer not only transformations of the State, but also to the basic question of state pow

isolated from these struggles for self-management or direct democracy. But if they are to modify the relations of power, such struggles or movements cannot tend towards centralization in a second power; they must rather seek to shift the relationship of forces on the terrain of the State itself. This then is the real alternative, and not the simple opposition between 'internal' and 'external' struggle. In the democratic road to socialism, these two forms of struggle must be combined. In other words, whether or not one becomes 'integrated' in the state apparatuses and plays the game of the existing power is not reducible to the choice between internal and external struggle. Such integration does not necessarily follow from a strategy of effecting changes on the terrain of the State. To think that it does is to imagine that political struggle can ever be located wholly outside the State.

This strategy of taking power leads on directly to the question of transformations of the State in a democratic road to socialism. Authoritarian statism can be avoided only by combining the transformation of representative democracy with the development of forms of direct, rank-and-file democracy or the movement for selfmanagement. But this in turn raises fresh problems. In the dual-power strategy, which envisages straightforward replacement of the state apparatus with an apparatus of councils, taking state power is treated as a preliminary to its destruction/replacement. Transformation of the state apparatus does not really enter into the matter: first of all the existing state power is taken, and then another is put in its place. This view of things can no longer be accepted. If taking power denotes a shift in the relationship of forces within the State, and if it is recognized that this will involve a long process of change, then the seizure of state power will entail concomitant transformations of its apparatuses. It is true that the State retains a specific materiality: not only is a shift in the relationship of forces within the State insufficient to alter that materiality, but the relationship itself can crystallize in the State only to the extent that the apparatuses of the latter undergo transformation. In abandoning the dual-power strategy, we do not throw overboard, but pose in a different fashion, the question of the State's materiality as a specific apparatus.

In this context, I talked above of a sweeping transformation of the state apparatus during the transition to democratic socialism. Although this term certainly has a demonstrative value, it seems to indicate a general direction, before which—if I dare say so—stand two red lights. First, the expression 'sweeping transformation of the state apparatus in the democratic road to socialism' suggests that there is no longer a place for what has traditionally been called smashing or destroying that apparatus. The fact remains, however, that the term smashing, which Marx too used for indicative purposes, came in the end to designate a very precise historical phenomenon: namely, the eradication of any kind of representative democracy or 'formal' liberties in favour purely of direct, rank-and-file democracy and so-called real liberties. It is necessary to take sides If we understand the democratic road to socialism and democratic socialism itself to involve, among other things, political (party) and ideological pluralism, recognition of the role of universal suffrage, and extension and deepening of all political freedoms including for

no more than a mere verbal trick. What is involved, through all the various transformations, is a real permanence and continuity of the institutions of representative democracy—not as unfortunate relics to be tolerated for as long as necessary, but as an essential condition of democratic socialism.

Mass Intervention

Now we come to the second red light: the term 'sweeping transformation' accurately designates both the direction and the means of changes in the state apparatus. There can be no question of merely secondary adjustments (such as those envisaged by neo-liberal conceptions of a revived de sure State), nor of changes coming mainly from above (according to the vision of traditional social democracy of liberalized Stalinism). There can be no question of a statis transformation of the state apparatus. Transformation of the state apparatu tending towards the withering away of the State can rest only on increased intervention of the popular masses in the State: certainly through their trade-union and political forms of representation, but also through their own initiatives within the State itself. This will proceed by stages, but i cannot be confined to mere democratization of the State-whether is relation to parliament, political liberties, the role of parties democratization of the union and political apparatuses themselves, or to decentralization.

This process should be accompanied with the development of new form of direct, rank-and-file democracy, and the flowering of self-managemen networks and centres. Left to itself, the transformation of the stat apparatus and the development of representative democracy would b incapable of avoiding statism. But there is another side to the coin: unilateral and univocal shift of the centre of gravity towards the self management movement would likewise make it impossible, in th medium term, to avoid techno-bureaucratic statism and authoritarial confiscation of power by the experts. This could take the form c centralization in a second power, which quite simply replaces th mechanisms of representative democracy. But it would also occur i another variant that is quite frequently envisaged today. According t this conception, the only way to avoid statism is to place oneself outsid the State, leaving that radical and eternal evil more or less as it is an disregarding the problem of its transformation. The way forward woul then be, without going as far as dual power, simply to block the path c the State from outside through the construction of self-managemer 'counter-powers' at the base—in short, to quarantine the State within it own domain and thus halt the spread of the disease.

Such a perspective is currently formulated in numerous ways. It appeases first in the neo-technocratic talk of a State which is retained because of the complex nature of tasks in a post-industrial society, but which administered by left experts and controlled simply through mechanism of direct democracy. At the most, every left technocrat would be flanke by a self-management commissar—a prospect which hardly frightens the various specialists, who are even manifesting a sudden passion for self-

will propose and the State will decide. It also appears in the language of the new libertarians, for whom statism can be avoided only by breaking power up and scattering it among an infinity of micro-powers (a kind of guerrilla warfare conducted against the State). In each case, however, the Leviathan-State is left in place, and no attention is given to those transformations of the State without which the movement of direct democracy is bound to fail. The movement is prevented from intervening in actual transformations of the State, and the two processes are simply kept running along parallel lines. The real question is of a different kind: how, for example, can an organic relationship be created between citizen's committees and universal suffrage assemblies that will themselves have been transformed as a function of the relationship?

As we see then, the task is really not to 'synthesize' or stick together the statist and self-management traditions of the popular movement, but rather to open up a global perspective of the withering away of the State. This comprises two articulated processes: transformation of the State and unfurling of direct, rank-and-file democracy. We know the consequences of the formal split between the two traditions that has arisen out of the disarticulation of these processes. However, while it alone is capable of leading to democratic socialism, this path has a reverse side: two dangers are lying in wait for it.

The first of these is the reaction of the enemy, in this case the bourgeoisie. Although old and well-known, this danger appears here in a particularly acute form. The classical response of the dual-power strategy was precisely destruction of the state apparatus—an attitude which in a certain sense remains valid, since truly profound breaks are required, rather than secondary modifications of the state apparatus. But it remains valid in one sense only. In so far as what is involved is no longer destruction of that apparatus and its replacement with a second power, but rather a long process of transformation, the enemy has greater possibilities of boycotting an experience of democratic socialism and of brutally intervening to cut it short. Clearly, the democratic road to socialism will not simply be a peaceful changeover.

It is possible to confront this danger through active reliance on a broad, popular movement. Let us be quite frank. As the decisive means to the realization of its goals and to the articulation of the two preventives against statism and the social-democratic impasse, the democratic road to socialism, unlike the 'vanguardist' dual-power strategy, presupposes the continuous support of a mass movement founded on broad popular alliances. If such a movement (what Gramsci called the active, as opposed to the passive, revolution) is not deployed and active, if the left does not succeed in arousing one, then nothing will prevent socialdemocratization of the experience: however radical they may be, the various programmes will change little of relevance. A broad popular movement constitutes a guarantee against the reaction of the enemy, even though it is not sufficient and must always be linked to sweeping transformations of the State. That is the dual lesson we can draw from Chile: the ending of the Allende experience was due not only to the lack of such changes, but also to the fact that the intervention of the

breakdown of alliances among the popular classes, particularly between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie. Even before the coup took place, this had broken the momentum of support for the Popular Unity government. In order to arouse this broad movement, the Left must equip itself with the necessary means, taking up especially new popular demands on fronts that used to be wrongly called 'secondary' (women's struggles, the ecological movement, and so on).

The second question concerns the forms of articulation of the two processes: transformations of the State and of representative democracy and development of direct democracy and the movement for selfmanagement. The new problems arise as soon as it is no longer a question of suppressing the one in favour of the other, whether through straightforward elimination or-which comes to the same thingthrough integration of the one in the other (of, for example, self management centres in the institutions of representative democracy) that is to say, as soon as it is no longer a question of assimilating the two processes. How it is possible to avoid being drawn in to mere parallelisn or juxtaposition, whereby each follows its own specific course? In what fields, concerning which decisions, and at what points in time should representative assemblies have precedence over the centres of direc democracy: parliament over factory committees, town councils over citizen's committees—or vice versa? Given that up to a point conflict wil be inevitable, how should it be resolved without leading, slowly bu surely, to an embryonic or fully fledged situation of dual power?

This time, dual power would involve two powers of the Left-a lef government and a second power composed of popular organs. And, a we know from the case of Portugal, even when two forces of the Left an involved, the situation in no way resembles a free play of powers and counter-powers balancing one another for the greatest good of socialisn and democracy, it rather quickly leads to open opposition, in which then is a risk that one will be eliminated in favour of the other. In one case (e.g. Portugal), the result is social-democratization, while in the other variant—elimination of representative democracy—it is not th withering of the State or the triumph of direct democracy that eventuall emerges, but a new type of authoritarian dictatorship. But in either case the State will always end up the winner. Of course, there is a stronj chance that, even before dual power reaches that outcome, somethin else will happen-something that Portugal just managed to avoidnamely, the brutal, fascist-type reaction of a bourgeoisse that can alway be relied upon to stay in the game. Thus, open opposition between thes two powers seriously threatens, after a first stage of real paralysis of th State, to be resolved by a third contender, the bourgeoisie, according to scenarios that are not difficult to imagine. I said third contender, but i will not have escaped the reader's notice that in all these cases (fascist-typ intervention, social-democratization, authoritarian dictatorship c experts on the ruins of direct democracy) this contender is in one form o another ultimately the same: the bourgeoisie.

What then is the solution, the answer to all that? I could, of course, poir to the observations made above, to the numerous works, researc

Well as to the partial experiences now taking place at regionar, municipal or self-management level. But these offer no easy recipe for a solution, since the answer to such questions does not yet exist—not even as a model theoretically guaranteed in some holy text or other. History has not yet given us a successful experience of the democratic road to socialism: what it has provided—and that is not insignificant—is some negative examples to avoid and some mistakes upon which to reflect. It can naturally always be argued, in the name of realism (either by proponents of the dictatorship of the proletariat or by the others, the orthodox neoliberals), that if democratic socialism has never yet existed, this is because it is impossible. Maybe. We no longer share that belief in the millenium founded on a few iron laws concerning the inevitability of a democraticsocialist revolution; nor do we enjoy the support of a fatherland of democratic socialism. But one thing is certain: socialism will be democratic or it will not be at all. What is more, optimism about the democratic road to socialism should not lead us to consider it as a royal road, smooth and free of risk. Risks there are, although they are no longer quite where they used to be: at worst, we could be heading for camps and massacres as appointed victims. But to that I reply: if we weigh up the risks, that is in any case preferable to massacring other people only to end up ourselves beneath the blade of a Committee of Public Safety or some Dictator of the proletariat.

There is only one sure way of avoiding the risks of democratic socialism, and that is to keep quite and march shead under the tutelage and the rod of advanced liberal democracy. But that is another story.

Translated by Patrick Camiller

On the Origins of Capitalist Development

Ben Fine

Robert Brenner's article in NLR 104 concerns a number of issues that have been the subject of debate within Marxism. Its focus is the explanation of the origins of capitalism, and related but not identical to this is the analysis of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. As such, considerations of the external forces (commerce) on pre-capitalist societies are integrated with an analysis of the internal dynamic of class structure, and conflict within the latter seen as primary. In contrast, Paul Sweezy, Immanuel Wallerstein and André Gunder Frank are shown to emphasize the role of exchange as the determinant rather than the stimulus of changes in class structure (and mode of production). As a result, Brenner is able to criticize the theory of surplus transfer associated with Frank, both in terms of its historical and conceptual explanatory power and for its failure to draw the distinction between exchange-orientated and capital-based modes of production. Unequal

1 'The Origins of Capitalist Development: a Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism', NLR 104, July/August 1977

3 See also, Arghiri Emmanuel, Unequal Exchange, NLB 1972, and the work of Samir Amin, e.g. Accumulation on a World Scale, New York 1974

The starting-point for any such debate is Marx's theories of primitive accumulation, precapitalist forms of capital, and genesis of capitalist ground-rent—the first to be found in Volume I, the latter in Volume III of Capital The debate on the origins of capitalism has continued in Rodney Hilton (ed.), The Transition from Feedelism to Capitalism, NLS 1976 Moreover, a distinction must be drawn between the origins of capitalism, the first transition, and the process of transition in the presence of existing capitalist formations.

a subordinate role in any analysis. Again, this is not a new observation, but Brenner's analysis sheds new light on all of these issues, first by bringing them together, and secondly by showing that the authors he criticizes share a common (and incorrect) problematic with Adam Smith, even if they draw different conclusions about the efficacy of the marketinspired division of labour for the periphery as opposed to the metropolis.

Brenner's accomplishment is significant because of the great popularity enjoyed by theories of unequal exchange as an explanation of the development of underdevelopment from the origins of capitalism to the present day. What is revealed by Brenner's success in criticizing unequal exchange as a theory of the origins of capitalism, however, is the poverty of the criticism so far levelled against the theory in relation to subsequent periods of capitalism. Here, theorization based on analysis of the development of class structure has simply been counterposed as the 'correct' alternative to (unequal) exchange-orientated explanations. There has hardly been any analysis of the interaction between the internal development of production and the 'external' stimulus provided by capital, whether through commerce or otherwise. Consequently, underdevelopment itself has not been adequately explained nor theories of unequal exchange satisfactorily criticized.

The purpose of this short note is to shed some light on these issues. By drawing upon Brenner's analysis it will be shown that the developments involved in the origins of capitalism differ from those associated with the transition from peripheral pre-capitalism to capitalism and in the development of underdevelopment in peripheral capitalism. Whilst it should be clear that there is broad agreement with Brenner's analysis, it is necessary at the outset to suggest some changes in emphasis from his work.

The Origins of Capitalism

Brenner emphasizes that, in the pre-capitalist world economy linked by commerce, there are limited opportunities for feudal lords to adopt the profit-maximizing techniques to be associated with capital accumulation. In addition, he stresses that feudal states can effectively isolate themselves from the competition of the world market because of their high degree of self-sufficiency. If left here, the role of commerce becomes completely insignificant as a stimulus to social change. Indeed, the only source of change would be the development of contradictions internal to each feudal state.

⁴ For example, Ernesto Laclau, 'Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America', NLR 67, May/June 1971, and Charles Bettelheim in Appendix I to Unequal Exchange, op. cit.

Without wishing to pre-judge any issue, I shall proceed for the sake of argument as if the pre-capitalist societies concerned are feudal.

That the division between production- and exchange-orientated theories of underdevelopment parallels that between neo-Ricardians and Fundamentalists (or expitallogicians) is, of course, no accident. For a characterization and entique of the schools constituting the latter division, see Ben Fine and Laurence Harris, 'Controversial listues in Marxist Economics', Secienti Register, London 1976.

internal contradictions in the world economy through the stimulus of competition in markets. The surplus appropriated by any lord is no longer identical with the surplus produced under his domain, but if determined by the exchange value of that surplus product. Forces are therefore acting to stimulate changes in the techniques of production a well as the mass and composition of commodities produced. Brenne discusses development of the techniques of production in terms of absolute and relative surplus labour, which can be defined in terms of greater appropriation of surplus through more work and more productive work respectively.

Now, for Sweezy, Wallerstein and Frank, this competitive stimulus to change brings about a smooth transition to capitalism as more productiv techniques are adopted. Brenner shows that the potential for relativ surplus labour is limited by the feudal class relations of production, s that greater reliance is placed upon absolute surplus labour (and/c withdrawal into autarky). In any case, the stimulus of competitiv exchange brings about an intensification of class struggle, the resolutio of which determines subsequent developments. The resort to relativ surplus labour would tend to bring into question the form of land tenur as a means of inducing or coercing productivity increase. Absolut surplus labour involves a direct clash between lord and serf over th existing conditions of land tenure and levels of rent.9 The move towar autarky might reflect the impossibility of resolving class conflict throug either development. The stagnation of production resulting from th 'equilibrium' may in turn be upset by the weakening of military power that accompanies a reduction in the mass of surplus appropriate (materials and workers cannot be released for war).

The ability to produce for the market is limited then by the existing cla relations of production and their development, but also by other materi conditions. Relative surplus labour improves productivity in the sho run, but in the longer run may lead to soil exhaustion whatever chang occur in land tenure. Absolute surplus labour (or the decrease in peasa

⁹ See Brenner's discussion of these, particularly in his complementary article, 'Agrai Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe', Past and Present 1 70. February 1976.

⁷ Brenner tends to ignore the role played by changing the composition of output. Of cour the separation of these changes according to the techniques of production and composition and mass of output is a conceptual exercise, whilst in practice the three may occur or have occur simultaneously.

Brenner uses the terms absolute and relative surplus labour in analogy with Mari concepts of absolute and relative surplus-value. This is clearly an erroneous, ahistori transfer of categories specific to one mode of production to another to which they are a specific (it is an error analogous to the identification of exchange relations with capita relations). For example, the production of relative surplus-value does not apply to luxure whereas a major share of feudal exchange consists of luxures. For the sake of continuity adopt Brenner's terminology here; but it must be borne in mind that absolute surplus labourply means more work for the lord, and relative surplus labour simply means in products for the lord with the same work, i.e. productivity increase benefiting the lord. Whethis may appear formally identical to the definitions of absolute and relative surplus-val the forms of control necessary for them to materialize are worlds apast and involve differ contradictions and class antagonisms.

within each domain, the ability to produce for the market will nuctuate, presumably, around a mild upward trend. For the world economy, this may be reflected in a competitive pressure, formed as many domains expand production for the market more or less simultaneously, or with one or more domains expanding at the expense of others that decline. In either case, and this is of crucial significance for our discussion, the stimulus of competitive pressure through the market is limited on a world scale by the existence of feudalism. In other words, just as commerce is a stimulus and not a determinant of change so it is in addition a limited stimulus in the pre-capitalist world economy. To It is for this reason that the original transition to capitalism can be so protracted.

The Initial Development of Capitalism

The reader of Brenner's article could be excused for thinking that once wage labour has become established, the production of relative surplus-value knows no bounds, even though the production of absolute surplus-value continues to persist. Nothing could be further from the truth. The immediate impact of capitalism is not a headlong rush into productivity increase, but a further intensification of the production of absolute surplus labour (value). In other words, it is the transformation of the relations of production and the associated social and individual means of controlling the production process that leads to an increase in the ability to appropriate absolute surplus labour. Increases in productivity do occur and there exists a greater potential for them, but they remain dominated by the production of absolute surplus-value.¹¹ It is for this reason that Marx drew the distinction between the formal and real subsumption of labour to capital, ¹² the latter corresponding to the revolution of the methods of production by the introduction of machinery. ¹³

For our purposes, the significance of the predominance of absolute surplus-value at the origins of capitalism is that the competitive stimulus to the co-existing pre-capitalist modes of production (including that within the capitalist state) remains limited rather than one dominated by productivity increase. ¹⁴ It follows that, in these societies, the stimulus to change provided by commerce remains limited. This does not mean,

In arithmetical terms, it is constrained by the differences between the highest and lowest levels of absolute and relative surplus labour, each of which is constrained by the mode of production and not just the historical conjuncture of the social formations involved. In addition as Marx asserts repeatedly in chapter 20 of Volume III of Capital, merchant capital itself limits the intensive and even extensive development of production.

¹¹ In addition, of course, the development of capitalism gives rise to greater flexibility in the composition of output in response to fluctuations in prices.

¹⁸ See the Appendix to Volume I of Capital, in the Penguin/NLR edition of 1976.

¹³ Although never clearly stated, Marx does not appear to identify the distinction between the formal and real subsumption of labour to capital with the distinction between absolute and relative surplus-value. Whilst manufacture does produce relative surplus-value, it is still associated with formal subsumption alone in the sense that the methods of production remain unchanged even if productivity is increased through the division and cooperation of labour. In contrast, machinery displaces labour in the production process, and resolutioning the methods of production.

¹⁴ The argument that at its origins capitalism was based on the existing methods of production but a transformation of the methods of control has been argued most forcibly by S. Marglin, 'What Do Bosses Do?', Reserve of Radical Political Economy, Summer 1974.

the production (but not necessarily social formation) under the control capital will itself become subject to new laws of motion, although the are not the ones associated with accumulation under developed capitalisi (the real subsumption of labour to capital). It will be subject to mor frequent cycles (of accumulation) than its predecessor, and these will be based on the distributional struggle between capital and labour as shortage of labour develops. For, as employment expands, wages wittend to rise and this is not off-set simultaneously by a reduction in the value of wages nor by the expulsion of living labour associated with machino-facture. As profitability falls so does accumulation, the demar for labour, wages; so the whole process repeats itself once profitability becomes restored. Clearly the effect of this cycle of accumulation depends upon the relative significance of capital within the states of 1 origin and the relative importance of these within the world economy as whole.

However, just as capital based on the production of absolute surplu value expands within states dominated by feudal relations, so the production of relative surplus-value develops within the sectors capital. In terms of the methods of production, manufacture acts as transitional stage to the introduction of machinery. Initially, morelevant for agriculture is the cooperation and division of labour ar specialization in production that is permitted by the transition fro feudal to capitalist relations of production. But the transition to the re subsumption of labour to capital receives its greatest stimulus only whe legislation is enacted on behalf of the working class. For as the avenues the production of absolute surplus-value are closed down, so the proce of competition coerces the adoption of machinery. In this context, Mara emphasis is on Factory Legislation to limit the length of the workir day. 18 Moreover, the production of relative surplus-value to reduce tl value of labour-power through the introduction of machinery has tl additional effect of reducing the social cost of reproducing labour-power As Marx argues, 'overwork produces the premature death of labou power itself... It would seem, therefore, that the interest of capital itse points in the direction of a normal working day'. On the other han capital therefore takes no account of the health and the length of life the worker unless society forces it to do so' (emphasis added)17—a ther which is returned to below.

In short, whilst the production of relative surplus-value can develop soon as capitalist relations are established, it can only fully flower aft

¹⁸ In my view this is the cycle of production being described by Marx, under the headi 'constant composition of capital', in chapter 25 of Volume I of Capital. It is not an analysis the cycle for developed capitalism (for which, see the law of the tendency of the rate of pre to fall of Volume III), as those who wish to base such cycles on distributional struggle to argue

¹⁸ Another important factor is the breaking down of parochial capitalist relations, to cre the real economic freedom of labour associated with capitalism, which enables workers be centralized in production. The history of the Poor Law in Britain must be seen in thight

¹⁷ Penguin/Nua edition of Volume I of Capital, pp. 376 and 381 respectively. It is not a intention to rehearse the analysis given by Marx. For an analysis of its significance, see E. Fine and Laurence Harris, Revealing Capital, chapter 7, (forthcoming)

by 1870, fully one hundred years after the industrial revolution associated with the textile industry, can it be argued that socially the real subsumption of capital to labour had been accomplished. How it came about and why it should take so long is of considerable interest for our enquiry. For if the interests of capital (see above) and labour coincide in limiting the length of the working day, why should it be 'the result of centuries of struggle between the capitalist and worker'?

The answer is to be found in the competition between capitalists. For individual capitalists relying predominantly upon the production of absolute surplus-value, limitation of the working day is a severe constraint on their competitive ability irrespective of its aggregate social impact. On the other hand, the development of machinery renders all technical limits on the working day irrelevant, as well as motivating the continuous motion of the machinery because of the fixed capital embodied within it (although the increasing intensity and length of work may impair its efficiency). Thus, even though the limitation of the working day necessarily stimulates the production of surplus-value through machinery, the corresponding large-scale capitalists may oppose the appropriate legislation. As the working class struggles to limit the working day, its interests may be reflected in legislation supported by backward capitalists (or even pre-capitalist interests) as a means of competition with large-scale capitalists (by rendering their fixed capital idle).18 Conversely, the limitation of the working day and other social legislation can squeeze out backward capitalists and release their capital—whether in the form of means of production, labour-power, finance or markets—to be centralized. 19 To conclude, the development of capitalism to its full maturity requires the formation of a power bloc, in response to working-class pressure, to limit the length of the working day and resolve the competitive conflict between different fractions of capital (and other classes) in a progressive direction.

Peripheral Capitalism and the Development of Underdevelopment

The significance of this analysis is to demonstrate that the competitive stimulus for change, provided by the development of capitalism, grew but remained limited up to the nineteenth century. Consequently, Brenner's explanation of the potential stability of pre-capitalist relations of production in the face of the development of commerce remains valid for a long period of time. Historically, the particular states to achieve the transition to capitalism were determined by the resolution of class conflict, particularly over the relations of production in agriculture.²⁰

¹⁴ The development of the nineteenth-century British textile industry is important here

¹⁹ See Mara's discussion of modern manufacture and domestic industry.

30 Of course, these developments cannot be reduced mechanically to class struggle. The particular form of integration into the world market and the role of nation-states is of particular importance. On these, it should be observed that, for Marx, merchant and interest-bearing capital had the effect of obstructing capitallist development unless capitalist-relations were already established (see note 2 above); and that the question of the strength or weakness of the nanon-state is subordinate to—indeed meaningless unless specified in relationship to—the question of the class forces to which the state is subject.

production relations of pre-capitalist formations is shattered one capitalist formations attain the real subsumption of labour to capital. For then, the competitive stimulus acting as a force of change through the world market is linked to systematic and secular increases in productivity. Consequently, where there is a failure of the periphery to develocapitalist relations, this has to be explained despite the intensification of competitive exchange relations. In other words, how can pre-capitalist relations continue to survive, when the surplus appropriated by the ruling class has a tendency to decline?

To some extent, this is a false problem. On the one hand, there has been development of capitalist relations at the periphery (this is returned t below). On the other hand, it is not a question of how pre-capitali formations could survive, but in what form It is here that we find th explanation of the development of underdevelopment. The pressures (the world market lead to those distortions of development associate with the specialization within the field of primary products, since producers remain primarily tied to the land. It should be stressed that the emerging international division of labour is not, therefore, determine simply by a series of differential fertilities associated with natur conditions of climate, soil, etc. For, as has already been observed abov the ability to vary the composition, means and conditions of productic depend upon the resolution of class conflict. Here we can agree wil theories of unequal exchange, that commerce is related t underdevelopment; but that it is so is not explained simply h consideration of the extent to which the surplus is appropriate domestically or transferred abroad. It is the relations under which th surplus is produced, and the products in which it is directly formed, th are of prime importance.

However, capitalism has also developed at the periphery, and it must lasked why this becomes constituted as an underdeveloped capitalism. Items of my earlier analysis, this can be seen to depend, not upon the forms it assumes—such as technological gaps and shortage of surplavailable for accumulation—but upon the obstacles to the transition bo from pre-capitalist to capitalist relations of production and from a form to a real subsumption of labour to capital. The result is an articulation within the peripheral formation of different modes of production, eaformed at a different stage of development, each articulated in turn with external fractions of capital. Consequently, there is a disorganization both exploited and exploiting classes. In particular, the class of wag labourers cannot organize in strength to struggle for limitation of the working day and other related reforms, so that capital 'takes no account of these questions, since no 'society forces it to do so'. Even where su pressures do exist, the competitive conflicts that divide the exploiting

** For a discussion of the articulation of modes of production, see Aidan Foster-Carter, **

Modes of Production Controversy', in NLR 107

st Of course, the fluctuations of economic activity associated with developed capitals undergo a transformation over those associated with the predominance of the production absolute surplus-value. A cycle of restructuring is generated, which is intensified by integration with a developed financial system.

than the formation of a power bloc committed to the necessary progressive reform.

Finally, it is necessary to comment briefly upon a new development in the relationship between metropolis and periphery: that concerning the internationalization of productive capital. Increasingly, multi-national corporations organize production so that it straddles national boundaries, including those dividing metropolis and periphery. Typically, the periphery can act as a point of assembly for parts manufactured in the metropolis. Does this generate a tendency for breaking with the continued development of underdevelopment, considered in terms of 'the interest of capital itself'? The answer must be in the affirmative (but the same is true of peripheral industrial capital, independent of foreign capital in the production process, whether foreign-controlled or not). In contrast, internationalizing merchant and financial capital need only depend upon the exchange of products with the periphery. But such a consideration of the interests of one fraction of capital is illegitimate. For competition within the fraction may paralyse progressive development (as for nineteenth-century British textiles). Moreover, internationalizing productive capital must be seen in terms of its interaction with other fractions of capital and forms of property. In this light, it could be argued that the class conflict generated by intensification of the existing methods of exploitation, coupled with the paralysis of progressive ruling-class leadership, opens the potential for revolutionary change in peripheral formations.

It is of some significance that theories of unequal exchange assign peripheral importance to politica, just as they do to internal class relations of production. Both are simply a mechanical reflection of the transfer of surplus abroad. Most clearly, there is a failure to construct a theory of the nation-state. For Frank, who more or less considers there exists a chain of surplus transfer from the Amazonian jungle to Fort Knox, this is an impossibility except as an externally imposed construct of political upon economic relations. For Emmanuel, states are simply defined by the extent of labour mobility within rather than between them.

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re phenomenon of Eurocommunism continues to occupy a central place the politics of capitalist Europe, in spite of the fact that the prospect of a are in government for the Communist Parties of France, Italy or Spain is is immediate than seemed likely two or three years ago. Concomitantly, impact of Eurocommunist political ideas continues to be felt on the Left en in countries where no mass Communist Party exists, perhaps most tably in the United States. In this issue of the Review, Henri Weber-108e interviews with Ernest Mandel and Giorgio Amendola appeared in LR 100 and 106 respectively—cogently appraises some of the main ments in Eurocommunist theory. Responding in particular to the theses vanced by the Eurocommunist Left-Trentin, Claudin, Poulantzaseber centres his analysis on the key question facing any strategy for cialism, that of State power, and concludes that Eurocommunism is a w form of gradualism, projected in abstraction from the class struggle d tending to adapt to a capitalist logic. Other aspects of Eurocommunism nain to be explored by revolutionary Marxists. What relation obtains tween the advance of these Communist Parties towards cabinet posts and current international economic crisis? What are the implications of ir changing relationship with the Soviet Union: will the Eurommunists' quest for a socialism radically different from the existing ler in Eastern Europe, and their criticism of the régime of Party tatorship in the USSR, lead them eventually to renounce the progressive nension of the Soviet Union-most strikingly attested in recent years by international policy from Vietnam to Afghanistan—and, through ATO, to align themselves with imperialism? How should the strategy d programme of the Eurocommunist leaderships be characterized, in ss terms? How are the Parties themselves changing, both internally and relation to their social base in the working class, especially its unionized tors? What is the dynamic of political differentiation within these rties, most dramatically highlighted by the debate in the PCF, and husser's intervention in it (NLR 109)? Discussion of these pressing estions will be continued in future issues of the Review.

chel Aglietta's book, 'Régulation et crises du capitalisme' (English nslation by NLB forthcoming), is perhaps the most ambitious attempt to e by a Marxist to theorize the overall historical development of the US momy. The work seeks at once to trace the specificities of its trajectory 1 to account for America's emergence in the late nineteenth and entieth centuries as trail-blazer and model for world imperialism as a

reinterpretation of the 'frontier' thesis, arguing that there was a unique fusion in American popular consciousness of the development capitalism and the construction of the nation. Isolating the particular role of migration, railroads, land speculation and taxation, among other factor in subordinating petty agricultural production to a constantly expanding capitalist circulation of commodities, Aglietta goes on to discuss the role the Civil War in laying the basis for subsequent dynamic growth in the Uproductive forces. Finally, he examines the generalization of capitality relations of production throughout the entire social division of labour in the United States, and analyses the advanced social relations that resulted fro this uniquely unfettered process.

Alexandra Kollontai was a pioneer fighter for women's emancipation in the heroic phase of struggle before the First World War, and a leading Bolshevik. Here, in a critique inspired by the women's liberation movement of the 1970s, Jacqueline Heinen analyses the strengths as weaknesses of a key untranslated work of Kollontai's maturity: a theoretic systematization of her views on women's oppression at a moment when's was still a prominent leader of a social revolution in the making, before the emergence of a bureaucratized power with which she was eventually make an accommodation—despite its many regressive policies, not least the sphere of women's rights.

This issue also contains Terry Eagleton's critique of John Bayley, Warte Professor of English Literature at the University of Oxford, author of number of books including 'The Characters of Love', 'Tolstoy and the Novel' and, most recently, 'An Essay on Hardy', and one of the best-known literary critics now writing in England. In a coruscating analysis, Eaglet examines the characteristic assumptions and procedures of Bayley's wor eliciting their relationship with the social ambience from which the emerge and defining their function within English academic criticis today. Taking direct and polemical issue with a major representative of the dominant culture, Eagleton's essay is a rare and welcome departure if Marxist literary theory in this country.

In 'The Modern World System', Immanuel Wallerstein presented synthetic account of the early development of capitalism, emphasizing t global character of its dynamic—Robert Brenner's review of the wo appeared in NLR 104. We are pleased to publish here a concise and equa original essay by Wallerstein, which outlines some of the main themes to developed in a forthcoming successor volume.

Eurocommunism, Socialism and Democracy

is well known, a reassessment of the relationship between Democracy and cialism lies at the heart of Eurocommunism's theoretical aggiornamento, derpinning the strategy of 'democratic roads' to socialism and the conception a 'State of advanced democracy'. This reassessment, which is explicitly sented as a revision of Lenin's theses on the State, may be summarized as lows. Between 'democracy' and socialism there is a relationship not of continuity but of inherence and consubstantiality. So-called bourgeois nocracy and its valued 'formal liberties' were not generously granted by the minant class, but conquered in the heat of battle by the armed people. The fruit class struggle, they are neither wholly bourgeois nor wholly proletarian; in a portion that varies with the relationship of forces, they are both the one and other—an instrument of bourgeois domination and a machine with which the pletariat wages war against such domination. They embody a truncated form of nocracy (truncated by the bourgeoisie), but one that is capable of being fected (through the action of the popular masses). A favourable evolution of

rights and freedoms, the democratization of existing institutions, and consequently the achievement of a democracy that is less and less 'formal', more and more 'real'. From this reassessment flow the driving ideas of Eurocommunist strategy.

Three Basic Convictions

First driving idea of Eurocommunism. Contrary to the views advanced by the Marxist classics, the transition to socialism does not necessarily run up against the institutions of the bourgeois-democratic State. It may perfectly well be achieved inside the framework of these institutionsprovided that a dialectic is established between the movement of selforganization of the masses in civil society and the action of democratic transformation within the state apparatuses. This thesis has its right variants-Berlinguer, Marchais, Carrillo. But it also has left versions, such as those of Bruno Trentin, Fernando Claudín, Nicos Poulantzas and Christine Buci-Glucksmann. Denying that it suffers from any legalist, gradualist or parliamentarist illusion, this Eurocommunist Left holds, that the dialectic between mass movement and democratic transforma-/ tion within the existing institutions leads to a series of breaks in the state apparatuses, and that mastery over the latter thereby passes to the popular movement. As a result of their numerical and functional development, the state institutions are invaded by wage-earning layers originating in the dominated classes or the petty bourgeoisie. This process shakes from top to bottom the relations between State and civil society. For in the course of the class struggle, these state employees may undergo massive leftward polarization, drawing the state apparatus to the side of the popular movement and making a decisive contribution, from within, to its remodelling.2

Second driving idea of Enrocommunism. Again in opposition to the theses of classical Marxism, it is argued that socialist democracy does not imply a radically new institutional system, qualitatively distinct from bourgeois parliamentary democracy, but can blossom fully within the framework of the latter's (rejuvenated) institutions. For Eurocommunists of every shade, the 'Paris Commune type of State' or 'Republic of Workers' Councils' extolled by Marx and Lenin as embryos of the workers' State merely constitute a dangerous utopia. All share Norberto Bobbio's judgment that, while the structures of rank-and-file power or direct democracy can and should be useful correctives to parliamentary democracy, they can in no way serve as a substitute for it. The regional, local and categorical fragmentation and distribution of power throughout the body of society implies 'a moment in which the general will takes

¹ See Santiago Carrillo, 'Eurocommusisis' and the State, London 1977, p. 13. 'Unless we work out a firmly-based conception of the possibility of democratizing the capitalist state apparatus, thereby adapting it for building a socialist society, without its forcible total destruction, we shall either be accused of unscrupulous factics or identified with social democracy'

² See, for example, Nicos Poulantzas's clear exposition of this point in *International*, Vol. rv, No. 1, 1977

³ Norberto Bobbio, 'Quale alternativa alla democrazia rappresentativa ³ Quaderno di Mondoperno, No. 4, 1976, p. 32.

synthesis. This site cannot be an assembly of regional delegates—the Central Council of Councils envisaged by Lenin. More generally, workers' councils cannot be the basic organs of the new state power, since they group the workers as producers rather than as citizens. For this reason, they are constantly in danger of being overcome by a 'parish pump', corporatist outlook. Historical experience shows that, by their own efforts, workers' councils are inadequate to the function of centralizing state power. What happens in reality is that the centralized apparatus of the dominant party or parties assumes this function in their name. If one is to avoid such covert centralization, together with the totalitarian fusion of Party and State which it implies, it is necessary to allocate the role of centralization and synthesis to a parliament elected by a secret, universal and territorially-based vote, free of binding mandates, and so on.

Third driving idea of Eurocommunism. The transition to socialism is a decades-long process of socialization of economic and political power. The conquest of power is not effected through a paroxysmal crisis which the very development of the State has made inconceivable in the West. It is achieved through the protracted labour of breaking up the hegemony of the dominant class, laying siege to its state apparatuses and dislocating its alliances; it is in this way that the working class asserts itself as the new hegemonic class. Here too, right and left variants exist side by side. For most Eurocommunist spokesmen, 'the succession of broad structural reforms, both economic and political, itself constitutes the Revolution' (Jean Elleinstein). But for the Eurocommunist Left, the transition to socialism cannot be accomplished without 'qualitative leaps' or 'breaks'. However, it is a question of 'breaks' in the plural, each of which occurs on a specific terrain (ideological, political, economic, etc.) and according to a temporality of its own. Buci-Glucksmann speaks of 'one continuous break' and of 'protracted dual power'. But this has nothing to do with a revolutionary break in which the global stakes are class power and the nature of the dominant mode of production.

Lenin's Excesses

Λ .(.κ., Who today would deny that the Leninist theses on democracy and socialism present certain excesses and lacunae? When they first proclaimed these positions, the Bolshevik leaders were doing their utmost to resist social democracy's Europe-wide collaboration in re-establishing bourgeois order, under the banner of defending democracy. Seen in this light, Lenin's denunciation of 'bourgeois democratism' and his symmetrical apologia for 'proletarian democracy', according to an unhappily familiar (and to some extent inevitable) procedure, 'bent the stick in the other direction' All too often, Lenin used the term 'formal' in the sense of illusory, unreal and 'purely formal', presenting democratic rights and liberties under capitalist régimes not as partial, truncated and manipulated rights, but as straightforward 'lures', 'swindles' and 'hollow phrases' In the already pretty intolerant Russian workers' movement, these excesses gave succour to a cynical and authoritarian frame of mind

⁴ Lettre aux Français sur la République du Programme Commun, Paris 1977.

Conversely, the alternative solution of soviet democracy was idealized to the point where its operating conditions, contradictions and difficulties were left unexamined. Very sharp-eyed in exposing the thousand tricks whereby bourgeois democracy eludes popular sovereignty, the Bolshevik leaders did not question the clauses of soviet democracy that could produce the same effects. The Paris Commune type of State' or 'Workers' Council Democracy' were presented as capable of direct application: there was no need for a transitional régime, through which the preconditions of a functioning council democracy might be established and its procedures worked out.

Worse still, having been driven by the weight of enormous difficulties to adopt exceptionally authoritarian measures, the Bolshevik leaders tended to erect some of their solutions as universal principles (the subordination of mass organizations to the Party, the dictatorship of the proletariat conceived as the power of the Communist Party, and so on). This did great harm to the international workers' movement, and was roundly denounced by Rosa Luxemburg. No doubt Lenin and Trotsky have the excuse that their enterprise was of a quite novel character, accomplished in the context of extreme difficulties. But that is no reason for following behind them: especially since the experience of Stalinism, while not being attributable to them, was to some extent facilitated by the way in which the Bolsheviks handled the question of democracy.

We do indeed have to criticize the excesses and recognize the lacunae in the Leninist problematic. But should we, in striving to overcome them, fall into step with the social-democratic critics of the 1920s? For one can hardly fail to be struck by the analogy between the Eurocommunist arguments and those of the Second International theoreticians polemicizing against Bolshevism. More than a simple political instrument to be used by the working class in seeking to overthrow capital, democracy is at once a means and an end. It is a tool for the establishment of socialism and it is the very form of its realization.' Thus wrote Eduard Bernstein as early as 1899, in a chapter entitled 'Democracy and Socialism' that would be worth quoting in full. Again, the theme, that democracy and socialism are 'consubstantial', and that the transition to socialism is to be accomplished in the framework of the institutions of the bourgeois-democratic State, was one upon which every variation was played by the social-democratic Right before 1914, and by socialdemocracy as a whole in the early twenties. And as for the idea of 'mixed. democracy', it was Karl Kautsky who became the principal advocate of articulating workers' councils and parliamentary democracy in such a system, in which central power remains the prerogative of parliament. Not only did he develop this idea in detail, but he used against the soviet system the entire panoply of objections, including the charge of corporatism, which are now being discovered by the Eurocommunists.



^{*} Eduard Bernstein, Evolutionery Socialism, New York 1963

⁶ Karl Kautaky, The Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Michigan 1964.

democrats proved to be far more radical than the Eurocommunist Left itself. Also advocating a combination of parliamentary and council democracy, they nevertheless stipulated: 'From the coexistence of these two forms of representation (the council pyramid and the National Assembly) follows the demand that the principal weight should rest with the Central Council of workers' councils. For the latter is the representation of a homogeneous class of toilers and thus embodies the truly general will to social transformation . . . Its field of competence should therefore embrace all questions concerning the economy . . . and it should also enjoy the uncontested right of taking initiatives before the National Assembly and of vetoing its decisions. The choice of government should be shared between the Central Council and the National Assembly, in a proportion still to be established."

The Eurocommunist Left is fond of appealing to Rosa Luxemburg, because she virulently criticized the Bolshevik leaders' positions on the Constituent Assembly affair (and on the relationship between democracy and socialism in general).8 But it should be remembered that, in 1918, she fought with all her strength against the convocation of a National Constituent Assembly in Germany and for the construction of a councilbased socialist democracy.9 And this is to say nothing of Gramsci: as Massimo Salvadori correctly states, it is not so much Gramsci as Kautsky and the theoreticians of the rump Second International who may legitimately be quoted in support of Eurocommunism. Indeed, Luciano Gruppi is expressing a growing recognition of this fact by PCI theoreticians when he writes: "The idea of transforming from within the class nature of the bourgeois State was a constant theme of the right and "centre" of the Second International." For his part, he urges the Eurocommunists to accept this 'compromising' lineage without embarrassment. After all, so much water has flowed under the bridge since 1920!

Democracy and the Bourgeois State

Against those pioneers of the democratic transition to socialism, Lenin registered a number of common-sense points that fully apply to the Eurocommunist theorizations of today. Whoever speaks of 'democracy' in general, as if it were an ahistorical essence defined by its attributes, it is speaking as a liberal, not as a Marxist. In class societies, 'we cannot speak of "pure democracy" . . . we can only speak of class democracy'. If The successive historical forms of democracy (that of Antiquity, the

⁷ Translated here from the anthology. Max Adler, *Dissocratus des consuls convers*, Paris 1977.

See also Otto Bauer, *Der Weg zum Sozialismus*, Vienna 1919.

See "The Russian Revolution' in Mary-Alice Waters (ed.), Rasa Luccamburg Speaks, New York 1970, pp. 365-95.

We must undermine the bourgeois state, and we must do so by putting an end everywhere to the cleavage in public powers, to the cleavage between legislative and executive powers. These powers must be united in the hands of the workers' and soldiers' councils, "Speech to the Founding Convention of the German Communist Party", ibid p. 423.

¹⁰ Luciano Gruppi, 'Sur le rapport démocratie-socialisme', Dudicisques, No. 17, p. 41

¹¹ See Bobbio's definition in op. cit.

¹⁸ Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky', in Selected Works Vol. 3, Moscow 1964, p. 80

democracy) are not imperfect—but ever more advanced—incarnations of 'democracy in general'. They are varied forms of class domination, in which democratic institutions are conceived and established in order to ensure democracy for the dominant and the subjugation of the dominated classes.

This approach prescribes a salutary distinction which is systematically obscured by all shades of Eurocommunism—namely, the distinction between the people's democratic rights and freedoms and the institutions of the bourgeois-democratic State. Even the most democratic institutions of bourgeois democracy are elements of a system whose function is to ensure the domination of a tiny minority over the immense majority. They are constituted not under the impact of working-class struggle—as Claudín would have it—but by virtue of the contradiction between development of the capitalist mode of production and all forms of despotic power. They subsequently broaden out to incorporate the democratic rights and freedoms conquered by the workers. But their undoubtedly real democratization is always structured by their basic function: to legitimize bourgeois power through universal suffrage, while keeping the masses away from 'public affairs'.

How does bourgeois representative democracy achieve this result? First, it perpetuates and deepens the separation between civil society and political power concentrated in the State. By atomizing the social body, sucking it dry and reducing it to passivity, bourgeois democracy more, and more strips it of its latent capacities for self-administration, and concentrates the reality of power in separate and tightly controlled apparatuses. Secondly, it obscures the structural inequality of individuals and classes vis-à-vis the law, thereby furnishing the owners of the major instruments of production with the means to manipulate opinion. Through its struggles, the popular movement can strengthen its democratic rights and freedoms and heighten the democratic character of bourgeois representative institutions. But it can lastingly do so only to the extent that its conquests do not decisively alter the basic function of these institutions. If 'democratization' oversteps certain limits, the system enters into crisis; and once that happens, the dominant class strives to reorganize the entire mode of its domination. As we know, it then cares little about safeguarding democratic principles.

In short, although bourgeois representative democracy goes considerably beyond previous régimes in the development of democratic freedoms, it also represents an institutional limit to further advance. Far from being possible in the framework of bourgeois democracy, the establishment of the democratic rights and freedoms necessary for socialist relations of production runs up against the institutional system of the bourgeois-democratic State It therefore requires a new type of democratic organization of power and society: It would be sheer nonsense', Lenin writes, 'to think that the most profound revolution in human history, the first case in the world of power being transferred from the exploiting minority to the exploited majority, could take place within the time-worn framework of the old, bourgeois, parliamentary democracy, without drastic changes, without the creation of new forms

applying democracy, etc.'13 It is not by turning our backs on this problematic, but by taking it as the starting-point that we should re-examine the relationship between democracy and socialism.

The Scope of Democratic Struggles

The struggle to defend and enlarge democratic freedoms is certainly a key strategic axis of the struggle for socialism in the West. This is not the point in dispute with Eurocommunist theoreticians. In the present epoch, marked as it is by a crisis of parliamentary democracy and a general drift towards a 'strong State', the struggle to defend and broaden democratic rights makes it possible to check the rise of state authoritarianism, to preserve the political conquests of the working class, and to bring out the contradiction between the ideology of popular sovereignty and the reality of the modern bourgeois State. The true question at issue is not the necessity of struggling for democratization of the State, both within and outside its institutions, but the scope, modalities and limits of such a struggle. Can it progressively transform—imperceptibly or through a series of 'breaks'—the class nature of the state apparatuses? Can it decisively swing them over into the people's camp? Or is the most it can do to assist the favourable evolution of the class relationship of forces, by strengthening the weight of all popular organizations and polarizing an important section of state employees to the left—in such a way that the workers will enter the inevitable clash with the dominant class under the best possible conditions?

These questions have major strategic implications. A positive answer to the first involves practical subordination of mass struggles to the goal of transforming the state apparatuses from within or of winning over their commanding personnel (the officer corps in the case of the army, and so on). By contrast, the second perspective involves relying on the breadth, maturity and resolution of the mass movement in order to polarize to the left the largest possible section of the state apparatuses. In other words, is the struggle to defend and enlarge democratic rights an indispensable preliminary to revolution? Or is it, in one way or another, a superior substitute for revolution? The revolutionary Left opts for the former hypothesis, Eurocommunism for the latter.

Curiously enough, although Nicos Poulantzas ends up embracing the theses of the Eurocommunist Left, we can find in his latest book all the arguments in support of the far-left choice. 14 1. The subordinate, if not marginal presence of the dominated classes within the State. Not only do they control no apparatuses, but their own weight is slighter, the greater the strategic importance of the apparatus with regard to the exercise of power (e.g. the Army, police, upper administration, judicial system, mass media). 'The dominated classes exist in the State. essentially in the form of opposition to the power of the dominant classes.' 18 2. The complex and

¹³ Lenin, 'Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletarist', ibid p. 155

¹⁴ Nicos Poulantzas, L'État, le pomoer, le socialisme, Paris 1978 (NLB edition forthcoming)
¹⁵ Ibid., p. 157

bourgeoisie to meet a popular accession to power by permutating the sites of real and formal power.' This is true both of the state system as a whole and within each of its apparatuses. It is not enough to occupy the heights in order to hold the entire apparatus; if the summit is lost, the centre of real power changes position. 3. The capacity, indeed virtuosity of the dominant class when faced with a 'popular victory'; its ability to 'restore the relationship of forces in favour of the bourgeoisie, sometimes in a new form'. 4. The attachment of state employees (including those most likely to swing to the left) to their distinct position and role vis-à-vis the popular masses. The 'limits' of their 'politicization' are such that it challenges neither the social division of labour within the State, nor the political division between leaders and led embodied in the State. 5. All the foregoing features are today exacerbated by the decline of bourgeois representative democracy and the rise of 'authoritarian statism'.

What should we conclude, if not that gradual, peaceful and legal transformation of the State is a lure—just like the hope of a leftward somersault on the part of most top personnel? What should we conclude, if not that 'radical democratization' of the State can only be achieved at the climax of a generalized phase of struggle, in a revolutionary situation, when the crisis of the bourgeois-democratic State is carried to breaking-point and the breadth of the popular movement places on the agenda a thorough remoulding of the entire state system.

Direct Democracy or Parliament

Similarly, revolutionaries are far from ignoring the strategic importance of rank-and-file democratic structures (factory, area, village and university councils; committees of soldiers or unemployed workers; and so on). On the contrary, the very axis of their strategy is the emergence, generalization and centralization of such structures—both as the means of popular control over economy, society and State, and as the basic cell of the new democracy. Where revolutionaries do differ with the Eurocommunist Left is not so much over the need to stimulate the development of rank-and-file democratic structures, nor even over the need, in countries with a long bourgeois-democratic tradition, to articulate these structures with parliamentary institutions. The disagreement rather concerns the distribution of competencies, the nature of the 'articulation'. Who decides what? Who votes on the plan? Who settles the broad national options? Who appoints and controls the government?

In the Eurocommunist perspective, the Councils propose but Parliament disposes. In reality, the workers' councils are thereby integrated into parliamentary democracy, and the inevitable result is the withering away of the Councils, just as the workplace committees have withered in France, and just as the Italian workers' councils are vegetating today. For to make proposals and exert pressure and control, the various parties, trade unions and interest groups are quite sufficient. The council system can survive only as a new structure of power. Patched-up

¹⁶ Tbid., p. 152

workers' democracy; to eliminate progressively the division between leaders and led and the separation of State and civil society. The more so because the historical conditions that produced the good old days of parliamentarianism have now ceased to exist. It is really another institutional system which has to be built—one that will allow the distribution of power at the base of society and the active participation of the workers in managing their own affairs.

In the articulation of parliamentary and council-type institutions, the reality of power must pass to the latter. We say this not out of dogmatic reverence for the letter of Marxism, but in full awareness of the difficulties involved in the establishment and functioning of socialist democracy. Such democracy must entail the reduction of working time by at least a half-otherwise the workers will have neither the leisure nor the energy to manage the economic units and the State. It also entails satisfaction of the citizens' basic needs; relative consolidation of the new social order (for if the council republic lives in acute danger of internal or external counter-revolution, the councils will be short-circuited by the state apparatuses in the name of urgency); a high level of working-class culture, skills and consciousness; democratic traditions profoundly rooted in every sphere of social life, and so on. If these preconditions do not exist, bureaucratic deformations of council democracy are unavoidable. But so long as the workers' democratic rights and freedoms are preserved and developed, such deformations can be overcome as the objective situation improves. At any event, the restrictions on democracy would be much greater in a parliamentary system, other things being equal.

We are a long way, then, from a beatific vision of council democracy. The essence of our argument is rather as follows. First, given the economic, political, social and cultural context of Western Europe, the conditions for a functioning council democracy can rapidly be assembled. Secondly, even if the process were to be difficult and gradual, the establishment of council democracy—of self-management socialism—is the condition sime que non of any real emancipation of the masses. It alone is capable of putting an end to the very matrix of oppression: namely, the expulsion of political power from civil society and its growing concentration in the separated body of the State. 17 The principle of council democracy does not refer only to recallability of delegates, modest payment of functionaries, limited mandates, the most frequent possible rotation of officials and so on. Above all, it designates the work-community as the basic political unit, rooting political democracy in collectives with a real existence, rather than in the purely nominal one of the electoral constituency. The council system thereby lays the concrete institutional basis of control over delegates and of mass mobilization for effective management of the economy and society. It creates the conditions for genuine popular sovereignty and a delegation of power that will no longer be mere abandonment of power.

The Eurocommunist critique of council democracy is hardly convincing.

¹⁷ See Daniel Bensaid, La révolution et le pouveir, Paris 1976, pp. 239-42.

narrowness? Why should their regional instances and the Central Council of Councils be organically incapable of assuming the function of centralization and synthesis discharged by local administration and the National Assembly in parliamentary democracy? There is a danger of corporatism in the council system, but it is neither greater nor smaller than the danger of localism under bourgeois parliamentarianism. In other words, it is by no means insurmountable. If the councils' field of competence embraces all the problems of political and social life, if the parties are able democratically to argue their positions on all the broad choices of the hour, and if the final decision lies with the Central Council following votes and elections throughout the council pyramid, then why should the council system sprout particularism of a more tenacious kind than that of parliamentary democracy? Why should its national instance not be up to formulating the 'general will'?

The Eurocommunists reply that such a system has broken down wherever it has been introduced; and that for this general ruin there must be a general reason. However, as a matter of fact, council democracy was established only in Soviet Russia—and under what conditions! It failed there for reasons that have nothing to do with the supposed propensity of workers' councils to corporatism. And if council democracy cannot function in the so-called developing countries, nor does parliamentary democracy seem able to do so. Like every democracy, socialist democracy is difficult to practise. In this field as in others, the Stalinist ice-age showed a real backwardness of elaboration. This is all the more reason to give, serious thought to past experiences and to draw lessons of greater scope than the necessarily summary indications of State and Revolution. But our deeper investigation has to point beyond 'delegate democracy' in the direction of 'active democracy', rather than harking back to a parliamentary democracy that is irrevocably condemned by the very evolution of monopoly capitalism.

Revolutionary Break or Protracted Transfer of Power

Finally, there is disagreement not over the 'specificity' of the transition to socialism in the advanced capitalist countries, but over the nature of this specificity. The theorists of Eurocommunism recognize the deep crisis of capitalism in southern Europe, but they deny that it may become condensed in a pre-revolutionary crisis, in the classical sense of the term: that is to say, a crisis of the State tending towards paralysis and initial decomposition of its apparatuses combined with a movement of generalized mass struggle involving the emergence and initial centralization of structures of people's power. However, well before the crisis of capitalism in Latin Europe generated its most notable effects, the Italian 'creeping May' and the 1975 experience in Portugal gave a still embryonic image of the kind of crisis that will inevitably be produced by the new phase of stagnation affecting world capitalism since the late sixties. To be sure, such crises have nothing in common with those in which the State broke down following the First or Second World War. Undoubtedly, the policy itself of the workers' movement constitutes a decisive factor in their breadth and development. But however original their rhythms and forms may be, they cannot fail, in this next quarter-century, to engender

explosions in which the entire equilibrium of the system will break, allowing the question of economic and state power to be settled 'in the heat of struggle'.

In this perspective, the role of a revolutionary party is to foster the unity and class independence of the workers and to champion the socialist alternative in as practical and concrete a way as possible: so that, with the next pre-revolutionary crisis, the people may organize itself at every level for control over production and society, as a prelude to the expropriation of big capital and the complete remoulding of the State on the basis of the council movement. As we have seen, such a perspective integrates the struggle to enlarge democratic rights and liberties—the indispensable preliminary to disintegrating the hegemony of the ruling class—with neutralization of its power apparatuses, dislocation of its bloc alliances and, conversely, with assertion of the working class as the hegemonic class. This struggle, through which popular layers as a whole are drawn into the struggle for socialism, is an altogether necessary experience. However, it is not sufficient: it prepares the best conditions for the revolutionary conquest of power; but it cannot serve as a substitute for it.

By excluding the possibility of revolutionary situations in the advanced capitalist countries, the Eurocommunists prove once again to be lagging behind events. They will let themselves be caught out by future crises, just as they were surprised by May '68, the Italian 'creeping May', and so on. What is more, they evidently rule out any strategy based on political exploitation of such situations. As for the Eurocommunist Left, its subtle talk of multiple and temporally fragmented 'anti-capitalist breaks', as against the revolutionary break of old, changes nothing of relevance. Its argument is based on a dubious play on words. For the notion 'anticapitalist break' designates two qualitatively distinct entities: on the one hand, realities that are perfectly compatible with the functioning of the capitalist system, such as the Left's accession to governmental power, or 'breaks' in the educational system, social customs and so on; on the other, realities that are strictly incompatible with the capitalist order, such as socialization of the productive forces or mastery of the state apparatuses. It puts on the same level breaks 'in' the system and breaks 'of' the system, with the latter evidently being programmed for some indefinite future. Under cover of this play on words, and in a manner reminiscent of the former strategy of 'capturing pockets of power' or the 'strategy of structural reforms', the orientation of the Eurocommunist Left seeks to achieve the transition to socialism while doing without a revolution. Its advocates imagine that if the elements of the revolutionary break are dissociated and spaced out from one another, the chances of success will be greater than if an attempt is made to pass the point of no return through a head-on trial of strength. But they forget that the class relationship of forces is always changing; that the opportunity to inflict decisive defeats on the dominant class only arises in certain critical conjunctures; and that, in between, the bourgeoisie manages to stabilize its system and throw the workers onto the defensive.

In both its right and left versions, the Eurocommunist strategy is a species of gradualism; and like all gradualisms, it has the slight defect of

which the Eurocommunist leaders start out, if the economic and political controls are left in the hands of the big bourgeoisie, there will be a compelling pressure to adapt to the logic of the capitalist mode of production and bourgeois society. (By definition, every strategy involving a protracted, gradual conquest of power initially leaves these controls with the big capitalists, since its aim is precisely to take them over 'progressively' or 'ultimately'.) The pcr provides a luminous example of this process. In the name of maintaining the consensus, it has been constrained to abandon most of the structural reforms advanced in its own, rather moderate programme, and to proclaim itself the all-round champion of austerity. This has resulted not only in declining living standards for the masses and their division between 'insecure' and 'protected' sectors, but thereby also in a deteriorating national relationship of forces.

It is true that the Eurocommunist parties now champion those freedoms which are flouted in the East; that they present themselves as the enemies of 'uniform thinking', the partisans of self-management and pluralism, and so on. This is, indeed, a cause for rejoicing among militants who have combated Stalinist despotism since the beginning—even though, as the persistent unanimity of PCF congresses demonstrates, there is still a big gap between the declarations and the facts. The unfortunate thing is that Stalinist positions are passing over without a transition into neo-social-democratic ones. And that is not necessarily a step forward. Agreed, the strategy of transition to socialism, like 'self-management socialism' itself,' has still largely to be invented in the advanced capitalist countries with a long democratic tradition. But for pity's sake, let us have a bit of imagination!

Translated by Patrick Camiller

¹⁸ See Régis Debray, Latira aux communitis français, p. 64. 'The idea of "peaceful, gradual and progressive Revolution" (Elleinstein), which postulates action without reaction, a working class without a bourgeois class, socialism without capitalists and victory without struggle, belongs to a deadly species of idealism. It is not the most moderate who have provided the fewest victims in history: twenty thousand Chileans paid with their lives for the scruples of a noble heart, and for the pacifism of a great democratic party.'

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Edward Arnold

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Phases of US Capitalist Expansion

e characteristic mode of existence of developed capitalism is large-scale ustry with its mass production.* Yet capitalist relations of production do not tarise from thin air. They derive historically from the formation of the wagening class by the gradual dissolution or destruction of previous modes of duction. This movement, moreover, can never be the exclusive product of an nomic logic. It requires political relations adequate to the domination of the ustrial bourgeoisie, and decisively involves the role of the State. The conons under which State power is exercised may be more or less favourable to implantation of capitalist relations of production on the terrain of the comdity economy. The rhythm and forms of penetration of these capitalist tions of production form the specific infrastructure of a particular social nation. It is this social infrastructure that enables us to grasp the differences

formations. And from this point of view, the United States displays major originality.

The Frontier Principle as a Specific Mode of Capitalist Penetration

All forms of precapitalist production have agriculture as their productive base. The fundamental economic condition for industrial capitalism to develop is the formation of a growing agricultural surplus product and its realization in the commodity form. In the United States this condition was enormously favoured by the existence of an immense reserve of unappropriated agricultural land. Yet it was made a reality above all by the political origins of the American nation, which united petty producers with the commercial and financial bourgeoisie in a common struggle against English colonial rule. This struggle, with freedom of enterprise as its aim, left a permanent mark on the ideological representations of American social relations, and created political institutions governed by those general principles that are the legal formalization of commodity exchange relations.

The legal subjectivity that reflects the general reification of commodityproducing societies was all the more decisively imposed in as much as there was no organic tie to precapitalist forms of production. It expresses the formal liberty and equality of individuals as economic subjects endowed with initiative, political subjects electing their representatives, and cultural subjects giving and receiving opinions. The totality is one of exchange relationships that are formed and unformed by the will of the contracting parties. This conception of social relations involves an irreparable rift between theory and practice. At one pole we have a positivism bearing within it economic utilitarianism and pragmatism, at the other pole an idealism which in the United States has taken essentially a religious form. But what is fundamental for an understanding of how; this representation of society was able to impose itself so uniformly is to bear in mind that it was not merely static, but was tied up with the expansion of the frontier. The energy that individuals expended in their economic competition did not merely reproduce a stable social order, it actually created new social relations.

The Frontier as Ideology

The frontier principle was more than is implied simply by its initial content, in other words the mere domestication of a geographical space. It was rather an ideological principle expressing the ability of the American nation to polarize individual activity in a direction of progress. This is why the industrial bourgeoisie was later able to get the whole of the nation to swallow the technological transformations induced by relative surplus-value by presenting these as the building of a 'new frontier'. The development of capitalism and the construction of the nation were thus identified into one process in the popular consciousness. The ideological

^{*} This extract is taken from Michel Aglietta, Régulation et cruss du capitalisme, Paris 1976 (English translation forthcoming NLB, 1979)

strata; bourgeois representations of the world were constructed without resistance; the juridical principles of the state took on a sacred and eternal character. Any questioning of free enterprise was perceived as a threat to the integrity of the nation.

The liberation from colonialism thus removed the political brakes from both geographical and economic expansion. Expansion is the dominant phenomenon of American life; it could almost be identified with the country's history. This expansion was the conscious work of broad masses of the population over successive generations. The community of petty producers who built up the frontier economy were never caught up in an agricultural economy geared to mere subsistence. To the extent that the frontier expanded, with the communications network becoming denser and structuring geographical space, the relative economic conditions of the different regions underwent a change. The mobility and mutual competition of the producers was sharpened by the permanent influx of new arrivals. This competition for the private appropriation of the best placed and most productive land gave a crucial role to speculation in landed property. This activity was fuelled by anything that changed economic conditions, in particular irrigation projects and the construction of railways from the 1840s onwards.

The period 1846-8 saw the end of the Mexican-American war, which handed California to the Yankees, as well as the gold discoveries there. These two simultaneous events unleashed an extraordinary wave of speculation, plunder and monopolization of land by all possible means of violence. After 1848, moreover, the world capitalist economy embarked on a long phase of expansion which stimulated American agricultural production. The space of commodity circulation expanded, and agricultural prices rose. A massive wave of immigration and migration to the West in search of profitable opportunity gave the frontier a jolt. Land prices rose rapidly, and with them the sums paid in settlement of inheritances. The more land prices rose, the more monetary resources were needed by new would-be producers or old producers seeking to extend their holding or move into regions where expansion was more favourable. The upshot was that the agricultural surplus product had more and more to take the commodity form and circulate in a wider space, thus stimulating the extension of means of transport, in order to bring its owner the monetary yield he needed.

These were the ideal economic conditions for capitalism to take hold in the new economic spaces in course of formation. Commercial and finance capital was already well established in the Eastern states, where it flourished on the basis of international trade. From the 1850s onwards, the development of means of transport led to the formation of new urban centres. West of the Appalachians: centres which became new sites of commerce and foci for the formation of new capital, as illustrated by the multiplication of banks. In California, mining operations and the expropriation of Mexican latifundists gave rise to an explosive centralization of capital. But the essential part of this economic expansion, depending as it did right from the start on the centralization of financial resources for the extension of railways, was directed by the

landed property was the establishment of railway and mining companies, these being above all else capitalist associations for engrossing the land. These companies obtained land concessions for the construction of the transcontinental railways, and the Federal government made them a gift of immense swathes of expropriated land on either side of the lines. The railway companies were financed by vast share issues and State loans. The same company that owned the railway also came to own all natural resources on the land granted it. These lands, which had been obtained for free and were now monopolized, were turned to profit by the railway line, whose construction cost the company's initial promoters nothing. They were subsequently sold off in small plots at very high prices, or alternatively leased.

In those regions where land was already apportioned, the companies managed to buy back the land that they needed at low cost, using every possible means of intimidation, one of these being to threaten the population of the towns and settlements along the proposed route that the railway would be diverted elsewhere if local authorities did not grant them the land they wanted on their own terms. The inhabitants of these towns were also forced to subscribe to loans issued by the companies and guaranteed by public authorities; and municipalities had to devote a good portion of their fiscal resources to railway finance. From the Mississippi west to the Pacific coast, railway and mining companies, along with other financiers involved in monopolizing the land, also had at their disposal the trusty weapon of control over water. It was enough to seize the watersheds overlooking the rich valleys either side of the Rockies in order to ensure control of immense territories; it then became possible to buy up particularly profitable land, or land with a strategic importance, and to hold the rest to ransom. The Western states passed very flexible legislation that closely met the requirements of the dominant financial groups.

Eventually, the increase in land prices brought small-scale producers into intensified competition to sell their agricultural product. Local commodity circulation rapidly became insufficient. The mechanism by which petty commodity production is dependent on capitalism was thus clinched by several processes that supplemented the direct monopolization of the land which we have just outlined. Firstly the need to expand the circulation of agricultural products put small-scale producers at the mercy of the railway companies for transporting their goods, and these appropriated a portion of the agricultural surplus in the form of prohibitive and discriminatory tariffs, an additional arm in their strategy of expansion. Subsequently the growth of taxes and rents, and the need to take out loans in order to finance their own enserfment to the companies, with the price of land purchase rapidly rising, forced the small producers into debt vis-à-vis merchants and bankers. This led to the rapid spread of mortgages and an increased indebtedness from the need to repay mortgage loans. By the outbreak of the Civil War, capitalist domination over petty commodity production was already well established. The transport infrastructure that provided the precondition for this was in full development, with the monopolization of mining process as well as bringing a qualitative modification.

The Civil War

The American Civil War was the final act of the struggle against colonial domination. This is why it is legitimate to see it as the origin of the modern epoch in the American capitalist revolution. The slave form of production in the South owed its existence and its prosperity to its total integration into an English-dominated international trade. It blocked the unification of the American nation on every level, and threatened to put an end to the frontier expansion. The long phase of industrial expansion in England after 1849, with its strong demand for agricultural raw materials, including cotton, actually incited the slaveowners to expand their domain, and slavery gained new footholds in the lands conquered in the South-West. In this way it braked the expansion of the textile industry and other industries using sub-tropical raw materials, as well as preventing the exploitation of immense mining resources. The slaveowners also exercised a preponderant influence in the Congress, sufficient to block any protectionist policy; industrial capitalism thus suffered as a whole, for the leading industries in the economic division of labour were unable to withstand English competition. What was at stake in the war was thus both the direct penetration of capitalism to the entire Union territory, a policy of commercial protection, and the political and ideological unification of the nation under the leadership of the industrial and financial bourgeoisie. The reasons for the political alliance between the capitalists and the small agricultural producers are clear enough. The latter feared above all else the extension of the slave system to the free lands of the West, and the blocking of the sale of public land by a Congress dominated by the slaveowners' representatives. Finally, these fiercely individualistic petty producers were also very strongly attached to the ideology and institutions of bourgeois democracy. Yet they were soon to find out to their cost that this was an alliance with the devil himself.

The Civil War gave a vigorous impetus to the development of the productive forces. Economic exchange between North and South was cut off, and imports from England reduced. The war effort in the North mobilized all industrial resources and promoted accumulation in those branches of Department 1 involved in the production of armaments, explosives and weapons, as well as the extension of communications routes. There was also a strong military demand for the products of the textile industry, and for food products, while army recruitment led to a great scarcity of labour-power. This circumstance favoured a very rapid advance of capitalist methods of production in the department producing consumer goods. Mechanization was undertaken in the textile and leather industries, which enabled women and children to be employed. In agriculture the strong demand gave a bigger stimulus than ever to production for exchange-value. Producers became indebted to the banks, who lent to them in paper money (greenbacks), this being issued as legal tender so as to finance the public debt.

The immediate post-war period saw expansion continue on a rapid

Only with the outbreak of recession in 1873, and the long depressed phase that lasted until 1897, could it be seen that the articulation of modes of production in the social formation had been profoundly changed. Petty commodity production bad gradually been integrated into capitalist production. This integration created a permanent tendency for labour productivity to rise in agriculture, and called forth a major expansion of the production of $\sqrt{}$ agricultural equipment. A strong tendency developed for farm prices to fall, these settling at the minimum level required to provide sufficient money to maintain a farming family, plus the valorization of the capital lent by marketing firms and banks. The fall in agricultural prices was in turn decisive in bringing about a fall in wages. It not only favoured accumulation in the department producing means of production; competition in agriculture also permitted the development of a powerful foodstuffs industry. One of the main patterns of interaction between the two departments of production thus found the conditions for its development much earlier and more far-reachingly in the United States than in the major European capitalist nations. This interaction by way of foodstuffs reinforced the radical separation between town and country required for the extension of commodity circulation in a vast economic space and for the deepening of the social division of labour.

Transformation of the Conditions of Existence of the Wage-earning Class

A long historical process which began at the start of the twentieth century # has seen the penetration of capitalist production into the mode of functioning of the town, and into the production of means of individual consumption for the broad mass of wage-workers. These two aspects are closely linked together. They enable us to understand how capitalist relations of production could spread over the entire field of social activities, and could subordinate the rationality of these activities to the equivalence of commodity exchange. This is how capitalism accomplishes the historical transformation through which it realizes its potential in the social formation. As long as capitalism transforms the labour process by the creation of collective means of production, but without reshaping the mode of consumption, accumulation still progresses only in fits and starts. The régime of accumulation is principally an extensive one, based on the build-up of heavy industry section by section. The jerkiness is a function of the uneven development of Department I, which depresses the overall rate of return on capital and requires phases of depression in which the value composition of capital is reduced by the destruction of a portion of the capital invested in production.

In the United States the most powerful heavy industry in the world was built up at an exceptionally rapid pace in the last third of the nineteenth century. This speed resulted from the specific social conditions which we summed up very briefly as the frontier principle. It also bears on the particular modalities of the formation of the wage-earning class. We shall see that these modalities favoured the historical transition of the United States over to a régime of principally intensive accumulation, based on the transformation of the conditions of existence of the wage-earning class.

requires demonstration): When the accumulation of capital finds its content no longer simply in transforming the reproduction of the labour process, but above all in transforming the reproduction of labour-power, this provides the criterion for a new stage in capitalist development. This stage bears with it quite new forms of the wage relation. It alters the stability of equivalence relationships in exchange, and modifies the monetary system. The functioning of the law of value, therefore, the fundamental principle of commodity regulation, depends on the conditions in which the wage relation is generalized across the whole of society.

When capitalist relations of production extend by the production of collective means of production, then the creation and extension of the wage-earning class which this movement brings about give rise to a double structural change: the separation between labour-power and means of production, which are combined solely in the labour process under the authority of capital, and also the destruction of the spatio-temporal environment shaped by precapitalist forms of production. This environment is characterized by close relationships between town and country; a rhythm of work marked by the seasons and stabilized by custom; an incomplete separation between productive and domestic activities; and a domination of non-commodity relations over commodity relations in the mode of consumption, with these non-commodity relations finding the conditions for their existence within the extended family and in relations of neighbourhood proximity.

There is no reason why the two components of the double structural change mentioned above should be produced together. Capitalism can implant itself for a long historical period without destroying the traditional mode of life, even benefiting from the way that labour-power is reconstituted by the non-capitalist environment in which it is still inserted. This makes it possible to pay very low wages, and impose very long working hours. In this period, however, the wage relation is not fully established. The destruction of the traditional social environment is produced by the development of heavy industry, leading to the total uprooting that is characteristic of the wage relation: the separation of labour-power from all its conditions of existence. The mode of life of the wage-earning class then suffers a deep degradation. This degradation is the basis of the gigantic structural transformation that all the capitalist countries experienced from the end of the nineteenth century through to the middle of the twentieth with the exception of England, which experienced it somewhat earlier and over a more protracted period. The logic of this structural transformation is the production of a new mode of consumption expressing the complete realization of the wage relation. This mode of consumption is characterized by the domination of commodity relations over non-commodity relations. There is no such thing as a consumer society, but there certainly is a universal extension of the capitalist mode of production in the social formations in which it is implanted. Capitalism can only reproduce itself by an incessant accumulation which develops as a mass production and consumption of commodities, a phenomenon generalized to embrace the sum total of activities in social life

To develop the law of capital accumulation and interpret the fundamental characteristics of twentieth-century capitalism, we must analyse the transformations of the wage relation from four distinct aspects. 1. The aspect of capital: i.e. the contradictory evolution of accumulation with its dual tendency to uneven development in Department 1 and the deepening of the social division of labour in Department II, to the extent that the commodity consumption of the wage-earning class increases. This involves, therefore, a study of the changing forms of competition in the context of the increasing density of exchange relations between the two departments of production. 2. The aspect of the productive forces: i.e. how production takes place is transformed under the constraint of relative surplus-value. This involves the interaction between the transformations of the labour process and the homogenization of the mode of consumption of the working class. We shall see, in fact, that the socialization of consumption in the form of the generalization of commodity relations influences the formation of wages and the use of labour-power in production. 3. The aspect of wage labour: i.e. the production of infrastructures, and the creation of new forms of the wage relation that enable the wage-earning class to purchase all the conditions of its existence and the general commodity circulation. These transformations can be interpreted as the formation of a social consumption norm. 4. The aspect of the commodities consumed: i.e. how the use characteristics of the objects of consumption are adapted to mass production, and how a functional aesthetic is diffused that structures the consumption norm; including, therefore, the rate of penetration of new commodities as a function of income differentiation, as well as the socialization of consumption expenditure by the wage-earners through credit, so as to overcome the obstacle to the acquisition by wage-earning households of consumer goods whose exchange-value is relatively great in relation to current income, and to the regularization of the cycle of renewing these goods by collective responsibility for those risks that give rise to exceptional expenses.

All these various aspects have to be thoroughly investigated if we are to develop the theory of capital accumulation into a general theory of capitalist regulation. Fortunately, there are already several studies in the different fields listed above. We intend to draw on these, on the basis of the law of capital accumulation already put forward, with a view to constructing the more concrete concepts needed to interpret the regulation of capitalism in the twentieth century. This requires us, first, to pursue our sketch of the specific characteristics of American capitalism. The frontier principle has shown us that these specific characteristics were, in fact, those that made the United States the exemplary nation of capitalist development, justifying our examination of it in the interest of a theory of regulation. These features are confirmed by the specific formation of the American working class and the very rapid dissolution of traditional ways of life.

Assimilation of Immigrants

The broad mass of unskilled labour-power in heavy industry between the

successive strata of immigrants of quite disparate languages and cultures. They therefore joined the American wage-earning class without any roots in the country. Making use of the political and legal equality enshrined by the constitutional principles and the American democratic tradition, the chief objective of these workers was that of cultural assimilation, according to the ethical norms of the subjective idealism that is the common basis of ideological representation for all social groups in the United States. This attitude was all the more marked in that these immigrants came to a large extent from the central and southern European countries, and were escaping the horrors of absolutism. The norms that the immigrants had to internalize so as to succeed in their cultural assimilation were individualism, the creation of a stable family, and the predominance of monetary gain as a criterion of social success and a spur to labour discipline. But they also encountered extremely harsh conditions of economic exploitation which materially denied the perspectives offered by political and religious liberalism. This dual aspect is fundamental for an understanding of the specific forms and objectives assumed by the American workers' movement. This movement took root in a country where political democracy was far more advanced than anywhere else in the nineteenth century, and where working-class organization was for the immigrants at the same time the bastion of their cultural identity as American citizens. The bitter class struggles of the 1890s were struggles against the degradation of living conditions, and were conducted in the name of the principles of the commodity-producing society itself. Not being waged in any great degree in the name of a proletarian ideology, these struggles conducted on a strictly economic basis gave a powerful impetus to the transformation of working-class living conditions in the form of commodity relations.

Having arrived completely uprooted, the workers of the new industrial centres had to struggle against conditions of life that had been entirely imposed by capitalism, in places where no previous urban community had ever existed. For the three last decades of the nineteenth century, the accelerated accumulation in Department 1 concentrated capitalist production around mining resources, waterways and railway junctions. Working-class concentrations were established at a rapid pace and in the greatest disorder. As a general rule, working-class housing was rigidly tied to the factory. Besides being hideous, it belonged to the factory owners. The latter rented out these dwellings at prohibitive rents, and if dismissed, the workers lost their homes as well. In the 1890s, these special conditions of exploitation provoked very hard-fought strikes, and disturbances that seriously disrupted production (e.g. the Chicago Pullman strike of 1894). The unhealthy condition of the industrial slums also became dangerous for the industrial towns as a whole. Finally, the immediate proximity of working-class housing to the factories began to impede freedom of industrial location and the quest for economies of scale that reduced losses of time by the spatial connection of production activities that were organically linked. This need was supplemented by that for services in the new industrial towns: sales outlets and urban transport, improvements of communications between business offices, and organization of business districts.

a political current inspired by the new bourgeois strata produced by the industrial revolution, who were campaigning for the establishment of these infrastructures which the large and rapidly developing cities lacked. Despite resistance from the financiers and landed proprietors who controlled the local authorities and strictly limited local taxes, political pressure on the city and state assemblies of the major industrial states of the East and Centre-East managed to generate a beginning of public. intervention in housing and urban infrastructure. As the outcome of political compromise, public housing advanced in waves whenever movements of industrial activity and population brought the need for housing construction on a very large scale. The four major waves of # expansion took place at the beginning of the century, after each of the two world wars, and at the beginning of the 1960s, when new households came into being as a result of the rise in the birth rate from 1940 onwards. On top of this, the 1920s and the entire period after the Second World War saw a strong demand for business offices due to the growth in bureaucratic personnel resulting from the increasing complexity of the administrative structure of big firms—and in the post-War period, also from the gigantic expansion of the Federal government.

Mass Production of Commodities

The extension of capitalist production of private consumer goods also posed other problems. The advance of the economic division of labour in this field certainly depended on the transformation of the housing situation which we have just referred to, and on the provision of urban infrastructures. But there were more direct constraints bearing on the production of surplus-value. The material means of consumption produced on a capital basis are commodities resulting from a mass production process and designed to be purchased by individuals. Their incorporation into the norm of working-class consumption is thus their contribution to the formation of wages. These commodities can only form part of the consumption norm if their unit exchange value is on the decline and is already sufficiently low. This requires that the conditions in which these commodities are produced are those of the standardized labour process of mass production. And for this to be the case, the social demand directed towards these branches must be sufficiently large and rapidly rising.

The squaring of this particular circle takes place dynamically in a non-linear process of contradictions with advances and blockages. The process is as follows. The social division of labour in Department it results from a differentiation of this department into a sub-department producing commodities bought by the portion of surplus-value consumed as income, and a further sub-department producing commodities bought by the monetary equivalent of the value of working-class labour-power. This differentiation of Department it itself depends on a development of the division of labour. To the extent that capital is accumulated in Department 1 and the division of labour there progresses, a centralization of capital is produced. This latter makes the job of capitalist management far more complicated, creating new social functions both in industrial firms and in the autonomous activities of the

basis for the increase in those salaried social categories who are paid in part from the appropriation of centralized surplus-value.

To the extent that the centralization of capital progresses, so too does the sum of surplus-value that is not accumulated, and in particular the dispersion of this portion of surplus-value among a larger number of individuals. It is essential, therefore, to note that the centralization of accumulated surplus-value has as its corollary the dispersion of the surplus-value spent as revenue. This is how a growing social demand is created for consumer goods that were previously considered as luxuries, so that these goods can now be produced by capital. However, the movement of these branches from the sub-department producing for surplus-value consumption to Department II as a whole does not take place automatically. When it is realized, in other words when the working-class consumption norm successively incorporates commodities already in existence, then capitalist relations of production find their biggest impetus. All technological progress can be given concrete expression in the transformation of the social conditions of production. Advances of productivity in Department 1 find their outlets in the expansion of Department 11. The fall in unit exchange-values in this department sufficiently increases the production of relative surplus-value to enable real wages to rise. Accumulation can thus progress at a rapid pace in both departments. Commodity production invades the entire life of society; all social relations become commodity relations. The limits to this accelerated and regular accumulation are those of the extension of capitalist relations of production to the whole field of social production.

It is from the generalization of capitalist production relations to the entire social division of labour that the United States draws its advanced social relations: the rapid integration of agriculture; the absence of cultural traditions geared to stagnation and subsistence production; the rapid formation of industrial towns unaffected by pre-capitalist forms of urban life; the homogenization of successive waves of immigrants, on the basis of the living conditions of the wage-earning class in large-scale industry; and a strong centralization of capital, inducing a very early adoption of new methods of management and sales which give rise to intermediate wage-earning strata (the famous American middle class into which the whole population is supposed to melt!).

These structural conditions were further reinforced by the circumstantial factor of the particular role played by the United States in the two world wars. The wars considerably enlarged production capacities in Department I, brought new methods of production to maturity, and distributed rapidly growing incomes—which the war economy forced into savings, and thus made into potential expenditure to fuel post-war reconversion to civil production. The 1920s were years of expansion of the sub-department producing commodities absorbed by surplus-value in its various revenues. This expansion was the work of the automobile, of electro-mechanical consumer durables, and the first electronic products. The development potential of these branches was enormous; but from 1926 onwards, threatening signs indicated that the development was being blocked by the limits of the market created by this sub-

social conditions of production of the time. But the transformation of these conditions as a result of the New Deal and the establishment of collective bargaining permitted capitalist accumulation to go forward on the entire front of Department in immediately after the Second Work War (which created greater possibilities of subsequent development that did the First). This accelerated accumulation began to get stuck in the mid-sixties. We shall try and introduce certain elements to help explain this crisis, by analysing the limits met with by the economy of living labour and the extension of surplus labour in the context of the labour processes currently obtaining; the increasing difficulties of further revolutionizing the conditions of existence of the wage-earning class in the sense of an ever closer dependence on commodity production; and the significant rise in social overheads that is linked with the generalization of commodity relationships.

Translated by David Fernbach

Liberality and Order: the Criticism of John Bayley

English literary critics command more respect than John Bayley, Warton rofessor of English Literature in the University of Oxford. The author of six ll-length critical studies, as well as of numerous articles and reviews, Bayley has of only become established as a revered figure within the literary academic orld; he has also become an influential force within 'metropolitan' literary lture, controlled as that apparatus largely is by Oxford English graduates. That tyley should be honoured as an authoritative, almost patriarchal figure within erary circles is in one sense unsurprising. In a University Faculty distinguished for its critical vigour, stubbornly pre-Leavisian in ideology, norously enclosed in traditional literary scholarship, Bayley's work stands out its imaginative idiosyncrasy. In an English critical milieu still strikingly rochial in its interests—the residue of that militant patriotism which helped to be birth to 'English' as an academic discipline—his close familiarity with issian, French, German and American literature is particularly impressive. Ilatively untainted by Oxford academicism, and apparently unidentified with

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It is, moreover, work which at its best can be quite remarkably perceptive. Working with the flimsiest theoretical scaffolding, Bayley nevertheless succeeds in producing critical insights which are rarely less than interesting and on occasions brilliantly provocative. His 'feel' for the quality of a literary text, for its distinctive flavour and nuance, is difficult to match within contemporary criticism; himself the author of an early novel, he displays a novelist's sensitivity to the 'intentions' of the writers with whom he deals. Disowning any facile schematism or reductive 'content analysis', Bayley can show himself superbly aware of the constraints and potentialities of literary form; and within the limits of his own critical 'theory', he is perhaps more intriguingly unpredictable in the accounts he will produce of a writer than almost any other English critic of comparable eminence. Much of his criticism of Shakespeare, Keats, Kipling, Lawrence, Hardy and others contains local insights of considerable acuity, worked through with an almost painful honesty and clear-sightedness; his generosity of spirit combines with a bracing, alertness to the intransigencies of a text, so that his best work seems at once tolerantly open and discriminatingly shrewd. He is, perhaps, one of the most munitable critics in England today, nobody's fool and nobody's camp-follower, free at once of slick professionalism and gauche amateurism in his resolute devotion to the business of criticism. The whole body of his work is caught within a spurious belief that the truth of a text resides in the consciousness of its author: it is this relationship. between work and authorial intent, which he has explored again and again, in an enviably wide acquaintance with literature. Yet it is remarkable to what illuminating uses this discredited theoretical doctrine is turned, in his accounts of, say, Yeats, Auden, Tolstoy and Hardy; few better examples could be found within contemporary criticism of the uneven relations between theory and practice.

Bayley's work, moreover, has the virtues of consistency. It is characteristic of the Oxford English school that its more publicly known members lead a double life. The racy iconoclasm of their journalistic output contrasts tellingly with the bland caution of their scholarly productions. All that unites the two is a shared absence of personal conviction. Intellectual seriousness is reserved for the editing of texts; criticism functions as a little light relief from such sober enterprises, an occasional display of Colour Supplement cleverness. It is symptomatic in this respect that the present Merton Professor of English Literature at Oxford devoted much of his inaugural lecture to demonstrating the futile subjectivism of his own discipline. Bayley, however, makes no such adjustments: his literary style, which (true to his own critical premises) seems consciously to sacrifice any facile brio of form to a felt sincerity of content, survives unruffled from critical study to newspaper review.

¹ The Rementic Survival, London 1957, The Characters of Love, London 1960, Tolstey and the Novel, London 1966; Publica: A compensative Commentery, London 1971; The Uses of Division, London 1976, An Essay on Hardy, Cambridge 1978. I am grateful to George Wotton, of Hatfield Polytechnic, on whose specialist knowledge of Thomas Hardy I have drawn in this article.

² In Another Country, London 1954

literary periodicals, he writes for them only on his own admirably uncompromising terms. In this sense, he emerges as a distinctively 'oldfashioned' critic, estranged in tone and sensibility from the brittle modishness of his younger epigones. Part of that estrangement is a matter of social background. What distinguishes Bayley from most prominent English critics is the impeccable ruling-class orthodoxy of his social upbringing and career. Born in 1925, he was educated at Eton and New College, Oxford, became an officer in the Grenadier Guards and served in Special Intelligence during the war; he was then elected a Fellow of three Oxford colleges in succession, and has remained at Oxford ever since as the occupant of a University Chair. He is married to the novelist Ins Murdoch, herself of bante-bourgeois Anglo-Irish provenance, who became an Oxford academic after a high-ranking career in the Civil Service. It is, then, particularly intriguing that Bayley continues to exercise such ideological power, in a literary world where others of his sensibility and 'social tone' are undoubtedly marginal.

Something of the secret of that power can be discovered in Bayley's first published book, The Romantic Survival, a study of Yeats, Auden and Dylan Thomas. In praising Romanticism for its 'power of investing ordinary objects with wonder and strangeness', he nonetheless enters a careat about the 'Romantic imagination' as such. It is likely to be overburdened with the abstracting, integrative drive of a singular, self-conscious vision; in its obsession with a 'conscious unifying aim', it lacks the relaxed, halfrandom 'naturalness' of a Shakespeare. Such a case implies a definite hostility to the 'modernism' of a Hulme, Pound or Eliot, whose 'rather prim and devitalized concepts' contrast tellingly with the 'enormous, if disorderly' nineteenth-century cult of the 'creative imagination'. There is a correlative suspicion of the 'analytical' criticism with which such modernism is habitually coupled. Bayley professes himself disconcerted by the proposal that the task of criticism should be the analysis of meaning rather than the description of enjoyment, and protests that the poem, 'like a human being, [has] a life of its own which is ultimately mysterious and irreducible' (p. 69). The Romantic critic, furnished with his 'experience and flair', can just so whether a poem is 'good', 'whereas the analyst will not admit that it is good until he has seen exactly what is in it, what it may mean' (p. 70). This brutal insistence on knowing exactly what it is you are appreciating must be rejected for 'a whole-hearted submission to a poetic experience before we begin to analyse it' (p. 72).

Love Against Ideology

A rather more programmatic rendering of this irrationalism may be found in Bayley's second, most influential study, The Characters of Lose, which offers studies of Troilus and Crestyde, Othello and The Golden Bowl.³ 'Love', in this work, figures as a metaphor of the desirable relationship between an author and his or her characters. 'What I understand by an author's love for his characters is a delight in their independent existence as other people, an attitude towards them which is analogous to our feelings

³ An aesthetic irrationalism perhaps most powerfully countered by Galvano Della Volpe in his Critique of Taste, NLB 1978

habit: 'Characters, it seems, are no longer objects of affection. The literary personality has gone down in the world' (p. 8). Proust, indeed 'Gallic logic' in general, may be blamed for this rash of emotionally deprived literary characters, this tendential full-off in personality-value. The 'hopelessly competitive plurality of our experience', lovingly endorsed by a Shakespeare, Balzac or Tolstoy, has become subject to formalizing rules, narrowing abstractions, assertive authorial egoisms. Tolerance, personality, contingency are destructively banished from literary texts; into their place flood opinions, monomaniacal absolutisms, tendentious purposes and 'insights'. The grubby hands of ideology have gripped the genial world of nineteenth-century realism—a world whose gratifying lack of ideology is well enough signalled by the fact that it was a world concerned with 'Nature'. 'Nature' is not an ideological concept: it suggests, instead, an involuntary fidelity to what is constant in human affairs, to the universal humours and foibles of men and women, to birth and death, joy and sorrow. It also suggests a certain hierarchy—not, of course, one of social class, although that, Bayley thinks, might 'come into it'-but rather one of human feelings; and Bayley presses home its preideological character by noting its preference for the family rather than for sex, average tranquillity rather than exceptional violence.

Once there was Shakespeare, who 'caught Nature as effortlessly as one might catch a train'; now there is modern fiction, anguished, bullying and self-brooding, uncertain about the 'natural' relationships between 'parents, wives and children'. The English are on the whole good at, Nature, whereas the Americans are not. Henry James got better at it as he went along: 'he had to learn, from prolonged sojourn in England, to take human nature as it came' (p. 273). Sustained by Nature, which does much of their work for them, the greatest writers can avoid the shabby 'ideological seriousness of Sartre and the moderns', manifesting a magnificent refusal to take their art too seriously. Joy is a reliable sign of this: it is lacking in Ulysses, which is 'leaden with its own art, sunk in its richness like a great plum-cake' (p. 285), but appears as a 'Shakespearian buoyancy', a 'lightheartedness in the exercise of the muscles', in that irresistible child of Nature P. G. Wodehouse. Since 'psychological and sociological theory' are all the time tediously insistent on erecting barriers between men, joy is a handy way of breaking them down. But Nature has now deserted the novel: instead of dealing with matters of real moment, the novel now 'importunes us with awareness of how suburban families live, or negroes, or intellectuals, or men in camps and prisons, or the young, or the very old' (p. 290). A little lightheartedness might dispel these unnatural preoccupations, and one symptom of it will be a tolerance of disunity and division in fictional form. The authoritarian visions of modernism refuse to embrace the world as it is, as a muddled, mixed, upand-down sort of place, callowly concerned as they are to make some coherent sense of things.

Bayley's penchant for formal disunity has become more evident in his subsequent work. It accounts in part for his admiration for Tolstoy, whose characters, he tells us in *Tolstoy and the Novel*, feel threatened by their environment when it 'becomes unified and makes sense' (p. 44). Tolstoy is another child of Nature: his works reveal that fine, cavalier

admires, as opposed to despicably knowing what one is about. Such creation in him is 'an involuntary process, a recognition, like stubbing a toe or shaking a hand' (p. 59). Significantly, then, the title of Bayley's next work is The Uses of Division which, dealing primarily with Shakespeare, Keats, Dickens, Kipling and Lawrence, opposes the fetishism of organic unity in the name of 'the felicities of a genius inherently baffled and divided', and once more appeals to traditional realism as the custodian of these values. Modernism's abandonment of conventional restraints—continuity, progress, character, even the 'happy ending'—threaten to deprive the reader of 'freedom' and 'privacy' by imprisoning him or her more securely within a tyrannical authorial consciousness. There are, however, safeguards against such deprivation: elsewhere in his work, Bayley comments that the main purpose of the class-system is to protect the privacy of the individual.

The vigilant reader may by now have begun to detect the presence of certain ideological pressures within Bayley's critical case; but this would be to mistake the character of his work. He is not, he insists in The Characters of Love, constructing anything as explicit as a theory: 'For any purposes except my present argument my categories and distinctions are probably as unreal as most of the abstract paraphernalia of literary criticism' (p 33). Like most English literary critics, he is happy to maintain a modestly agnostic, humbly sceptical attitude towards the value of his own pronouncements. By the time of Tolstoy and the Novel, indeed, his refusal to be explicit has become considerably more explicit: 'All novelists with an implied or stated theory about the Novel's relation to life are certainly alienated' (p. 58). It is not, naturally, from the standpoint of any 'theory' that Bayley is able to launch this remarkably Olympian judgement; even though he has been arguing since 1957, in book after book, for 'realism' against 'formalism', 'character' against selfconsciousness, pluralistic contingency against diagrammatic 'typicality', he is surely not to be convicted of having engaged in anything as cumbrously indelicate as 'theorizing'. Such a charge would understandably come as a surprise to Bayley, since throughout the length of his work he shows little or no interest in what are commonly called 'ideas'. (This does not, however, prevent him from studding his texts with self-consciously placed generalizations, which sometimes read as though they were intended as detachable bons mots). The blankness of his criticism in this respect is matched only by his unflinching suppression of the fact that literary texts are produced from particular historical conditions. His ability to move from Balzac to Dickens, Shakespeare to Pushkin, is facilitated by the fact that he remains for the most part serenely unhampered by the demands of historical specificity. There are references to historical conditions in such works as his book on Tolstoy; but they remain for the most part largely gestural. For all his emphasis upon the routinely 'real' as opposed to the inhumanly formal, his 'reality' remains in this respect an utterly abstract affair.

Bayley's Romantic irrationalism is naturally what motivates his alarm at 'analytical' criticism, with its brusque violation of humanist pieties. For him, the literary text is essentially a subject, with a subject's rights to

up to 'life'; it is rather that he suffuses literature with all the delightful unpredictability of persons, so that excessive analysis of a text becomes equivalent to grievous bodily harm. And just as criticism 'appreciates' rather than dissects the text, so other critics have 'appreciated' Bayley's critical texts, in a graceful spiral of mutual confirmation. 'Love', 'charm', 'sweet-temper': these are among the terms which criticism has seen fit to use of Bayley's work, transforming those texts into 'subjects' in their, turn In the end, his books are made to sound like 'characters' one would think more of marrying than of examining.

'Character', indeed, provides the lynch-pin of Bayley's critical ideology: the metaphysic which he finds in that particular organization of textual significations has survived, in English criticism at least, a half-century or more of philosophical and psychoanalytical reflection. (The powerful, if partial, critique of the notion launched by Scrutiny and its associates is thus particularly impressive). 'Character' provides an assuring centre of unity, yet is essentially unpredictable; it thus offers a parallel to 'Nature', which is at once settled, hierarchical Labenswelt and delightfully disordered In both cases, it is clear enough that liberal disorder is dependent upon conservative order—upon that customary world of the carolessly takenfor-granted, refuge from the vulgarity of rational argument, within which the gentleman may wear his art and opinions lightly. That the historical supports of such an attitude are, increasingly, available only in Oxbridge is not evident to Bayley, any more than he is aware that his passion for the wonderfully pointless, his shy distaste for the highroads of history, his elevation of the contingent over the central, reflect by and large a view of life from the Oxford Senior Common Room window. The areas of society which make such an existence possible in the first place are not remarkable for the 'joyous equanimity' with which stray details may be tenderly savoured.

The Problem with Hardy

It seems peculiarly appropriate, then, that Bayley's latest work should be a study of Thomas Hardy. For Hardy is a writer of 'Nature', a major realist, and one who seems notably unconcerned, in his mixed, disparate literary forms, with that pursuit of organic unity which obsessed a James. Not that Bayley's interest in such formal dissonances has anything in the least in common with recent Marxist and semiotic demystifications of the 'unity' of the literary text. For Pierre Macherey, such texts suffer internal displacement and disruption by virtue of the symptomatic absences enforced upon them by the ideological matrices from which they emerge; it is around these eloquent silences that the text's various chains of signification begin to fissure and unravel.4 Bayley's concept of textual diffusion, by contrast, is purely empiricist: it is precisely because the text is 'free' of ideological intrusions that it is able to mime all the lovable muddle of life itself. But Hardy is a less easy writer to appropriate than he thinks. Indeed Hardy has always proved a peculiarly recalcitrant author for bourgeois criticism; such critics have been hard put to know quite

⁴ See his Pear me Théorie de la Production Littéraire, Paris 1966 (English translation forthcoming).

Lionel Johnson in 1894, to this latest contribution by Bayley, Hardy has proved a constant source of embarrassment and unease to the custodians of 'English Literature'. It is not surprising that the title of an influential essay on Hardy published a decade ago read: 'What Kind of Fiction Did Hardy Write?'; bow to read Hardy has been a constant cause for anxiety.

The name 'Thomas Hardy', like that of any other literary producer, signifies a particular ideological and biographical formation; but it also signifies the process whereby a certain set of texts are grouped, constructed, and endowed with the 'coherency' of a 'readable' or were. 'Thomas Hardy' denotes that set of ideological practices through which certain texts, by virtue of their changing, contradictory modes of insertion into the dominant 'cultural' and pedagogical apparatuses, are processed, 'corrected' and reconstituted so that a home may be found for them within a literary 'tradition' which is always the 'imaginary' unity of the present. But this, in Hardy's case, has been a process of struggle, outrage and exasperation. He is a major realist, the creator of 'memorable' scenes and characters; yet he can be scandalously nonchalant about the 'purity' of orthodox verisimilitude, risking 'coincidence' and 'improbability'. With blunt disregard for formal consistency, he is ready to articulate form upon form to mingle realist narration, classical tragedy, folk-fable, melodrama, 'philosophical' discourse, social commentary, and by doing so to betray the laborious constructedness of literary production. He is, acceptably enough for a Victorian, something of a 'sage'; yet his fictional meditations assume the offensively palpable form of 'ideas', obtrusive notions too little 'naturalized' by fictional device. He seems, gratifyingly enough, a novelist of the 'human condition'; yet the supposedly dour, fatalistic bent of his art, its refusal to repress the tragic, has had a profoundly unnerving effect upon the dominant critical ideologies, which must be rationalized as 'temperamental gloom' or a home-spun fin-de-siècle pessimism. His 'clumsy' provincialism and 'bucolic' quaintness are tolerable features of a 'peasant' novelist; but these elements are too subtly intertwined with a more sophisticated artistry and lack of rustic 'geniality' to permit a confident placing of him as literary Hodge.

A predominant critical strategy has therefore been simply to write him out. Henry James's elegant patronage ('the good little Thomas Hardy') finds its echo in F. R. Leavis and Scrutiny, who expel Hardy from the great tradition' of nineteenth-century realism. More generally, Hardy criticism may be seen to have developed through four distinct stages, all of which may be permutated in the work of any particular critic. Hegemonic in Hardy's own lifetime was the image of him as anthropologist of Wessex—the charming supplier of rural idylls who sometimes grew a little too big for his literary boots. After the publication of The Dynasts, a new critical phase is initiated: Hardy is now, in G. K. Chesterton's notorious comment, 'the village atheist brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot', the melancholic purveyor of late nineteenth-century nihilism. It is this view, conveniently distancing as it is, which on the

Inn Gregor, Eusys in Criticism, Vol. 16, 1966

Anon community and Maner accorded or and contenty, where medical and 1940s and fifties, Hardy's reputation is more or less in decline. An Anglo-Saxon criticism increasingly controlled by formalist, organicist and antitheoretical assumptions ('New Criticism' in the United States, Scrutiny in England) can make no accommodation for Hardy's texts; R. P. Blackmur insisted in 1940 that Hardy's sensibility was irreparably violated by ideas.7 From the late forties onwards, however, there is a notable shift towards a more 'sociological' reading of Hardy. In 1954, an influential study by Douglas Brown focused sentimentally upon the conflict between rural 'warmth' and urban invasion; and four years later John Holloway was reflecting upon Hardy's 'vision of the passing of the old rhythmic order. of rural England'. Safely defused by such mythologies, Hardy could now for the first time ment the attention of critics more preoccupied with colour imagery than with the Corn Laws or the Immanent Will; and the sixties and seventies have witnessed a stealthy recuperation of his texts by formalist criticism. 10 In the year of the anniversary of his death, then, the critical floodgates stand wide open: he has been phenomenologized,11 Freudianized, 12 biographized, 13 claimed as the true guardian of 'English' liberal-democratic decencies against the primitivist extremism of emigre modernists.14

The Scandal of Hardy's Language

From the beginning, however, the true scandal of Hardy has been his language. If there is one point on which bourgeois criticism has been virtuelly unanimous, it is that Hardy, regrettably, was really unable to write. Since this is rather a major disadvantage for a novelist, it is not surprising that criticism has found such difficulties with his work. Confronted with the 'unrealistic' utterances of his 'rustics' and his irritating 'oddities of style', criticism has been able to do little more than inscribe a 'Could do better' in the margins of Hardy's texts. The Athenaeum of 1874, reviewing Far From the Madding Crowd, complained that Hardy inserted into the mouths of his labourers 'expressions which, we simply cannot believe possible from the illiterate clods whom he describes'. A reviewer of The Raturn of the Native, who protested an passant about the 'low social position of the characters', found that Hardy's characters talked as no people had ever talked before: "The language of his peasants may be Elizabethan, but it can hardly be Victorian'. If the language of the 'peasants' was odd, that of their author was even odder. Again and again, Hardy is berated for his maladroit, 'pretentious' use of latinisms, neologisms, 'clumsy and inelegant metaphors', technical

7 The Southern Rever, VI, Summer 1940.

⁶ See, for example, Helen Garwood, Thomas Hardy An Illustration of the Philosophy of Schopenhauer, London 1911, E. Brennecke, Thomas Hardy's Universe, London 1914, A. P. Elliott, Fatalism in the Works of Thomas Hardy, London 1935

Thomas Hardy, London 1954.

The Charted Mirrer, London 1960.

10 See, for example, David Lodge, The Language of Fixture, London 1966; Tony Tanner, 'Colour and Movement in Hardy's Test of the d'Urbervellet', Critical Quarterly, x (1968); Ian Gregor, The Great Web. The Form of Hardy's Major Fixture, London 1974.

¹¹ See J. Hillis Miller, Thomas Hardy. Distance and Desire, Cambridge, Mass. 1970

¹⁸ See Perry Messel, Thomas Hardy. The Return of the Repressed, London 1972.

²⁸ See R. Gittings, Young Thomas Hardy, London 1975.

¹⁴ See Donald Davie, Thomas Hardy and British Poetry, London 1973.

exasperated by Hardy's apparent inability to write *property*; on the other hand, it sneers at such attempts as the bumptiousness of a low-bred literary upstart. *Scrutiny* in 1934 bemoaned his 'clumsy aiming at impressiveness'; a doughty defender like Douglas Brown nonetheless finds his prose 'unserviceable, even shoddy'; and David Lodge informs us that 'we are, while reading him, tantalized by a sense of greatness not quite achieved'.

The ideological secret of these irritabilities is clear. Early Hardy criticism passionately desires that he should be a categorizable chronicler of bumpkins, and protests when such 'rustic realism' is vitiated; later criticism desires to take Hardy seriously as a major novelist, but is forced to acknowledge that, as an 'autodidact', he was never quite up to it. What is repressed in both cases is the fact that the significance of Hardy's writing lies precisely in the contradictory constitution of his linguistic practice. The ideological effectivity of his fiction inheres neither in 'rustic' nor 'educated' writing, but in the ceaseless play and tension between the two modes. In this sense, he is a peculiarly interesting illustration of that literary-ideological process which has been analysed in the work of Renée Balibar. 15 'Literature', Balibar argues, is a crucial part of that process whereby, within the 'cultural' and pedagogical apparatuses, ideologically potent contradictions within a common language (in the case of postrevolutionary France, 'français ordinaire' and 'français littéraire') are constituted and reproduced. The 'literary' is an ensemble of linguistic practices, inscribed in certain institutions, which produce appropriate 'fictional' and ideological effects, and in doing so contribute to the maintenance of linguistic class-divisions. Limited though such an analysis is by its residual 'sociologism', and fragile though it may be when exported from the specific pedagogical conditions of bourgeois France, it nevertheless has a marked applicability to Hardy. It is not a question of whether Hardy wrote 'well' or 'badly'; it is rather a question of the ideological disarray which his fictions, consciously or not, are bound to produce within a criticism implacably committed to the 'literary' as vardstick of maturely civilized consciousness. This is not to suggest that the question of the aesthetic effects of Hardy's texts can be reduced to the question of their ideological impact; that a text may embarass a dominant ideology is by no means the criterion of its sesthetic effectivity, though it may be a component of it. But in Hardy's case, these two issues are imbricated with a peculiar closeness.

The only critic who has understood this fact is, characteristically, Raymond Williams, who finds in the very letter of Hardy's texts the social and ideological crisis which those texts are constructed to negotiate. Williams, indeed, has been one of the most powerfully demystifying of Hardy critics, brilliantly demolishing the banal mythology of a 'timeless peasantry' dislocated by 'external' social change. But his text, symptomatically, has had little general influence; and the same may be said of Roy Morrell's masterly study, 17 which tackled and defeated several

¹⁸ See R Balibar, G Merlin and G. Tret, Las Français Fictifs: le rapport des styles hitéraires au français national, Paris 1974; and R. Balibar and D. Laporte, La Français National: constitution de la largue nationale commune à l'époque de la révolution démocratique bourgooise, Paris 1974.

¹⁶ The English Nevel from Dichest to Lawrence, London 1970, pp. 106 ff.

¹⁷ Thomas Hardy. The Will and the Way, Oxford 1965

criticism remains worried by the precise status of Hardy's 'realism'; and it is not difficult to see why. For the contradictory nature of his textual practice cannot but throw into embarrassing relief those ideologically diverse constituents of fiction which it is precisely fiction's task to conceal; it is by 'not writing properly' that he lays bare the device.

John Bayley, however, is typically undisturbed by Hardy's 'disunity'; indeed it is precisely this, among other things, which attracts Bayley to him. In his Introduction to the New Wessex edition of Far from the Madding Crowd, Bayley writes perceptively of that peculiarly Hardyesque diversity 'in which the separate ingredients seem quite unconscious of each others' presence', and recognizes the necessary recalcitrance of such fiction for the remorselessly 'organizing' intelligence of a Leavis or Trilling. Pierre Macherey, however, has pointed out that the familiar bedfellow of 'normative' criticism is empiricism: the one seeks to 'correct' the text against a ghostly model of what it 'might have been', the other sinks itself tolerantly into the text 'as it is'. Neither method is thereby able to displace the work into its material determinants—to accomplish the difficult dialectical feat of 'refusing' the text's phenomenal presence while acknowledging that such a presence is necessary and determinate.

Bayley's Sublimation

Bayley, accordingly, offers us in his latest book not a corrective criticism, but a placid, middle-brow endorsement of Hardyesque 'diversity' and 'incongruity' as a valid reflection of the ups-and-downs of 'life', with its co-existence of 'absurdity, felicity and sublimity'. Hardy's characters can be 'wonderfully ridiculous' as well as deeply moving; his fictions are comfortably traditional, but at the same time not too distressingly 'literary' or roulu. We should not, in short, be too harsh on him: his very 'failures' can be savoured, given enough critical charity. His 'lukewarmness' can become addictive; he does not particularly mind 'falling flat', but then that is pretty much how life is; his very 'weakness'. is 'deep down, reassuring'. The utter tedium of Hardy's novels is precisely the source of their unique charm: this is my caricature, rather than a quotation from Bayley, but it perhaps suggests just how Bayley's essay represents the ultimate, logical 'processing' of the 'text-functions' we know as 'Thomas Hardy'. Aesthetic 'weaknesses' are still identified by the traditional criteria of bourgeois criticism, but then, in that very act, complacently forgiven, 'disunity' is tolerated, not as an index of the ideological-linguistic torsions within which those texts struggle, but as a consoling mimetic image of 'life'. The final emasculation of Thomas Hardy is modestly, courteously carried through.

It cannot be achieved, however, without a drastic rewriting of the received Hardy canon. For Bayley, Hardy starts to go wrong somewhere mid-way through *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. The earlier work manifests a 'naturalness, a current of vitality and seeming joy in creation' which palls as we approach those later, intransigently 'ideological' novels, *Test* and *Jude*; Hardy's 'rich equanimity', his genial Shakespearian expansiveness,

¹⁸ Thomas Hardy, Far from the Madding Crowd, London 1975, p. 19

Madding Crowd displays an accepting 'joy' which 'as Matthew Arnold said can calm and satisfy us as no other [power] can'; 20 but there is clearly neither 'joy' nor ideological sedative in Hardy's later fictions, and they must consequently be unobtrusively relegated, with reservations, to the realm of the 'artificial' and 'theoretical'. Any such rewriting of Hardy 18, naturally, an ideological gesture of the most flagrantly significant kind. What it does, in effect, is exactly to repeat the gestures of Hardy's contemporary critics, who wished he would confine himself to the woods rather than blunder into drawing-rooms. It is quite clear that Inde the Obscure, for Bayley as much as for the outraged Mrs Oliphant (if for rather different reasons), is still an unacceptable text. Naturally so: for not only does it see, and see through, the dominant ideological apparatuses of Victorian England (religion, education, the family), but it also threatens to see through a related ideological formation: literary realism. No 'realist' account of that novel—a novel itself obsessed with writing. production, literacy, representation—is able to take its pressure; no stretching of 'verisimilitude' can domesticate such calculated 'improbabilities' as Sue leaping out of the bedroom window to escape Phillotson, or Jude drunkenly reciting the Nicean creed in an Oxford pub. With Inde the Obscure, the 'realist' Hardy turns and rounds on his readership; and we have the historical record of how they, in turn, rounded upon and savaged him. John Bayley, committed as he is to a naive mimeticism, does not examine these aspects of the novel; instead, he tells us that Sue Bridehead has an 'irresolution . . . distorted out of its natural form by the ideas and tendencies of the time that Hardy seeks to impose'. It is entirely logical that an apparently 'innocent' aesthetic ideology, which values fiction for showing us life 'as it is', should be coupled with this callous anti-feminism.

The period of Bayley's early critical production is the time in which, by and large, 'New Criticism' held sway in the United States and Scruting in England. It is not difficult to read Bayley's work as an implicit riposte to this phenomenon—as the rearguard action of a partially by-passed Oxford humanism, compounding both liberal and reactionary elements. Leavis is certainly the critic whom Bayley refers to most frequently; and the appearance of a lengthy apologia for Shakespeare's Othello in The Characters of Love, following on Leavis's trenchant interrogation of the play's status in Scrutiny, is surely not fortuitous. Indeed that book can be read as a deliberate attempt to mount a counter-attack on Leavis's criticism—besides the case of Shakespeare, there is the effort to salvage James's The Golden Bowl from Leavis's rejection of it as decadent formalism. Bayley and Leavis share a similar empiricism, a penchant for 'realism' as a paradigm case of literary production, and a hostility to 'theory'. But Leavis's devotion to close critical analysis, aspects of modernism and 'significant organization' are precisely, for Bayley, the ideological enemy. Leavis's aesthetic represents a curious cross-breed of formalism and mimeticism, as his ideological position compounds

¹⁹ This is a recognizably 'Oxford' tactic. It is remarkably similar to John Carey's insistence, in The Violent Efficy, London 1973, that Dickens criticism should cease its tight-lipped, tediously zealous search for moral, symbolic and historical meanings in Dickens and acknowledge instead that he is really just rather funny.

²⁰ Op. cit. p. 13. ²¹ An Essey on Harrly, p. 212.

fusion in his coupling of 'character' and 'Nature' (Shakespeare's characters exist 'both in themselves and as parts of a natural structure'); but since his 'Nature' is essentially an empiricist concept (in contrast to Leavis's quasi-metaphysical notion of 'Life'), he pleads for mimetic rather than formalist modes in its literary embodiment. Leavis's organicist nostalgia is one kind of idealist response to industrial capitalism; Bayley's anti-organicism is another, identifying all 'totalities' either as 'ideological' and authoritarian, or as the imposed, monomaniacal visions of an errant modernistic individualism. In place of this 'existential' individualism, Bayley offers the more traditional liberal individualism associated with the concept of 'character'—a concept which, as I have indicated, depends upon essentially unliberal notions of order, hierarchy, convention and custom—in a word, upon a Burkeian trust in 'Nature'. This combination of liberal-individualist and reactionary components is undoubtedly one source of Bayley's ideological power: he seems to satisfy at once the demands of a patrician conservatism and of an exploratory, agnostic individualism. The cult of 'character' re-surfaces in the late 1950s and sixties to challenge, in the name of both traditionalist 'appreciation'. aesthetics and what John Goode has termed 'neo-liberalism', 2 a criticism which seems intent on deconstructing the unitary self into 'themes' and 'image-patterns'. The 'technocracy' of the 'New Criticism', itself an effect of the 'end-of-ideologies' era, is seen by 'neo-liberalism' as the latest ideological threat to humanist values

Rearguard action though it was, the force of this critical ideology should not be underestimated. While Europe was passing through its major. critical systems—classical philology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, psychoanalysis, structuralism—English criticism managed to survive essentially unscathed, so deep were its roots in a commonplace philistine empiricism.22 It was such philistine empiricism which powered the 'neoliberal' enterprise, and continues to do so today. For what is literature if not the very home of the contingent, of the uniquely experienced, the last, gloriously untidy refuge from an increasingly 'uniform' and 'ideological' world? English criticism is already coyly flirting with various forms of more elaborate aesthetic theory; but it is unable to effect a break with the still extremely powerful ideology which Bayley's work signifies. The ideological significance of Bayley's criticism might in the end come down to this that his position is almost painful in its theoretical paucity, but that it is legitimated by the sheer force of his personal sensitivity and perceptiveness as a standpoint to be respected and adopted. In this sense, part of Bayley's task is to ratify English criticism's inability to confront its own intellectual nullity. That this is so was well demonstrated by his generous obituary notice on F. R. Leavis, in which he remarked on the fact that Leavis had 'marvellous taste'. A One might as well congratulate Gramsci on his common sense

M New Statesman, 21 April 1978

^{23 &}quot;"Character" and Henry James', New Left Revew 40, November/December 1966 Relevant works, besides Bayley's, include Iris Murdoch's 'Against Dryness', Encauster, January 1961, and W. J. Harvey's Character and the Novel, London 1965

²⁴ 1957, the year of publication of Bayley's The Romentin Survival, also saw the appearance of the Canadian Northrop Frye's mighty 'totalization' of all literature, Anatomy of Criticism Despite Frye's egregious defects, the implied comment on the state of English criticism is telling

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Kollontai and the History of Women's Oppression

tween April and June 1921, on the eve of the Third Congress of the Communist ternational, Alexandra Kollontai delivered fourteen lectures at Sverdlov niversity on Women's Labour in the Evolution of the Economy. These were intended: women workers and peasants who were either members or close sympathizers the Bolshevik Party. Their substantive importance is evident, in comparison the most texts of that period on the question of women's liberation: for they tematically tackled all the problems debated by revolutionaries concerning the ecific oppression and exploitation of women, demonstrating the richness of ollontai's thought and her then unrivalled historical and anthropological owledge. But they are also of interest in so far as they clearly show the litations of a figure who, among Bolshevik leaders, went furthest in studying origins of women's oppression and in calling into question the family and ditional sexuality. Perhaps more than all the rest of her political works, her vels and her autobiography, this course of lectures reveals the contradictions methods to tree herself. These remain incomprehensible unless

and the shaking of all bourgeois values in the aftermath of revolution, but also the immense economic difficulties which affected the backward country of Russia, particularly after the Civil War, and which imposed the recourse to NEP and a marked retreat in measures of collectivization and socialization.

How tild Kollontai face this situation in 1921, as a leader of the Workers' Opposition, who had been removed from the Bolshevik leadership after a short period as People's Commissar of Public Health? In discussing the steps taken by the young workers' state to hasten women's emancipation, Kollontai stressed above all the economic measures which were alone capable of laying the basis for a real liberation. There was nothing that was not highly orthodox in the priority she gave to the socialization of domestic tasks and to the various reforms needed to inaugurate genuine women's autonomy at the economic and political level. Relatively little can be found in these pages about the struggle to be waged against traditional morality. In this respect her discourse falls short of what might have been expected from a feminist militant who, both at a theoretical level and in her private life, had challenged a number of the assertions made by Marx and by Engels on marriage and sexuality.

For to Engels's conviction that 'instead of declining' after the socialist revolution, monogamy 'finally becomes a reality—for the men as well',2 Kollontai had opposed the theory of free love and of different types of love-relation, basing herself on her own experience as a woman in quest of her freedom. And whereas Engels was convinced that the communis order 'will make the relation between the sexes a purely private relation which concerns only the persons involved, and in which society has no call to interfere', 3 Kollontai argued in a 1918 pamphlet The New Morality and the Working Class: 'But what is the origin of our unforgiveable indifference to one of the essential tasks of the working class? How can we explain the hypocritical relegation of sexual problems to the pigeonhole of "family affairs" not requiring a collective effort? As if relations, between the sexes and the elaboration of a suitable moral code had not. appeared throughout history as a constant factor of social struggle! As if relations between the sexes, within the limits of a determinate social group, had not fundamentally influenced the outcome of the struggle between opposed social classes 14

It was therefore legitimate to expect that, in a course given to women Party militants, Kollontai would give an account of her positions and of her differences with a leader like Riazanov. (Riazanov had argued that 'all

¹ The lectures were subsequently published in volume form as Trial Zhenthchiny v Evolyuttui Khoryuttua, Moscow and Petrograd 1923. A German translation has recently been produced: Die Situation der Fran in der guellichefilichen Entwichlung, surzehn Vorleitungen von Arbeitermuss und Behartmann, Frankfurt 1975. The text was taken from a 1926 Swedish edition, republished in 1971, which was based on Kollontai's notes and a shorthand manuscript.

³ Friedrich Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State', in Marx-Engels Selected Works, Moscow 1970, p. 502.

³ Friedrich Engels, 'The Principles of Communism', in Marx-Engels, Collected Works, Vol.

^{6,} London 1976, p. 354.

4 Alexandra Kollontai, The New Merality and the Working Class, Moscow 1918. Here translated from Kollontai, Marxime et Rivolution sexuelle, Paris 1973, p. 171

'objects''', and had even defended the persistence of marriageregistration in future society: 'Such regulation will become a duty to society as natural as labour itself. Communism is inconceivable without the registration of all the productive forces and all the needs of society; in communist society too, man is the most precious productive force.76 It might also have been hoped that she would polemicize against Lenin's positions on the question of sexuality. She certainly knew of the concern he had expressed shortly before to Clara Zetkin, about the meetings organized by the German Communist Party in which women workermilitants came together to discuss problems of marriage and sexuality, and about the dangers which such discussions supposedly held for the youth circles too. In this context, Lenin had stressed the energy thereby diverted from the political tasks of the hour. But Kollontai does not say a word about these points, emphasizing instead the need for the Russian proletariat as a whole, and the women in particular, to devote all their strength to increasing productivity.

However, her silence should not surprise us unduly if we remember that, in this period of scarcity and catastrophic post-war decline of the productive forces in Russia, everyone's attention was focused on the measures that would allow the life of the first workers' state to be saved. As all oppositional tendencies were here in agreement with the rest of the Party, 'ideological' debates tended to be pushed into the background. A clear indication of this is the fact that the texts of the Workers' Opposition, of which Kollontai was a major leader, pay little notice to women's oppression or the political orientation required to combat it. We should also remember that, up until then, Kollontai had been almost completely isolated in the positions which she took on the question of sexual liberation, her Pravda articles having been attacked on several occasions, especially by members of the Bolshevik leadership. This compelled a certain prudence in her propaganda and educational work conducted in the name of the Party—above all since these lectures were given at Sverdlov University just after the Tenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, which had adopted a resolution ordering 'the immediate dissolution of all groups without exception formed on the basis of a platform' and stressing 'the inadmissible character of any kind of factional activity'. This resolution was aimed in particular against the Workers' Opposition. In a period marked by the first political insurrection—the Tenth Congress was held a few days after Kronstadt the Bolshevik leaders feared that the group to which Kollontai belonged might call into question internal Party discipline, and thus weaken the fighting capacity of the Party in face of the dangerous economic crisis. And even though her ideas on women's liberation (unfortunately) had little to do with the indicted platform of the Workers' Opposition, Kollontai certainly felt bound to remain very close to official positions in her lectures on the question.

David Rizzanov, 'Communism and Marriage' 1926, French translation in Particesi No. 32-3, Paris 1966, p 88

Ibid , pp. 80–8 r

⁷ We should be wary about Lenin's precise words, since they are reported by Zetkin in her *Mamerius of Lenin*, written in 1924 when she was nearly seventy. But there can be no doubt that her account expresses his basic thinking on the matter—especially if we compare it with other statements contained in his letters to Inciss Armand

respect even when she differed with the Party leadership: her agreement not to publish certain criticisms of the SPD leadership before 1914, or to suppress important passages of her autobiography in 1926. All these involved critical remarks on the Party's passivity with regard to women's oppression, or else referred to her own positions on the problems of sexuality. (It should be stressed that this prudence did not prevent her from waging a systematic struggle until that time—first in the SPD, then in ${\cal I}$ the Bolshevik Party—in order to force through a radical change in practice and attitudes.) However, while self-censorship may provide an explanation of the minor importance attached to sexual relations in her Sverdlov University lectures, it cannot account for her failure to challenge the division of tasks within the family and society. For, in many passages, Kollontai refers approvingly to a more than ambivalent definition of the senctity of motherhood, which gives priority to women's role as mothers and educators. In the same way, her excessive attention to productivity in discussing the problems of abortion, communal living and child-care (see below) expresses a view of the social division of labour which cannot be accepted.

This conception, which Kollontai really does seem to have held at the time, may seem surprising when we consider her careful study of the appearance of the social division of labour and the division of tasks between men and women. (Her first lectures deal precisely with the origins of oppression.) It also contrasts surprisingly with the importance she attached in previous writings to the transformation of personal relations in everyday life: with, for example, her 1913 text on Society and Motherbood, in which she discussed the question of contraception in future society, asking how, even under socialism, motherhood could be combined with real equality of social roles. But once again, the grave economic difficulties mentioned above and the realization that freedom of sexual relations is highly precarious when nearly all women have no means of controlling their bodies—these are sufficient explanation for the axis of her talks and for her conclusions concerning the immediate tasks of the Party. What is more surprising is that Kollontai gave the militants in her audience no perspective for the future, when the economic crisis had been overcome. How should we understand this?

Primitive Societies

With these talks, I wanted to give the students a general and readily accessible overview of the Marxist position on the woman question, as well as to show, in the last four chapters, the present revolution in women's living conditions and their new place in the workers' state, which implies for me that they be recognized as full members of society.' So wrote Kollontai in an introduction prepared in 1925 for the Swedish edition of her Sverdlov University talks. It is worth reviewing here the essential points which she examined in her fourteen lectures for women-workers and peasants, many of whom had only a vague idea of Marxist theories. For the content of the course testifies to the high level of debate possible in the period following the seizure of power.

In the very first lecture, which deals with primitive societies, Kollontai

women's place and status in society are determined above all by their role in the production process. Recapitulating what has many times been written on women's determining role in the discovery of agricultural techniques, she shows that, according to whether they lived in an agricultural or a nomadic tribe, the status of women in primitive societies with no private property exhibited considerable variation—even in a single epoch and in regions relatively close to one another. It has been proven', she says, 'that the women of small agricultural tribes enjoyed greater equality. In some cases, there even existed a matriarchal system.'s The reason is evidently that, under matriarchy, women made a decisive contribution to the economic development of society, the system being founded on the mother's role as an unexplained and inexplicable source of life, whose power was the object of veneration.

While referring to Bachofen's theories on the matter, Kollontai nevertheless makes clear: It was their role as the principal producers, and not the fact that they were mothers, which entailed the dominant place of women in certain agricultural tribes." Otherwise, how could we explain the position of inferiority in which women found themselves in most nomedic tribes? In fact, it was as the keepers of livestock that they came to play a secondary role: they had no occasion to develop their intellectual or bodily capacities, always having it in their power to slaughter an animal for food. Not only did that strengthen the view of women as an inferior being dependent on the man and his physical strength, but 'the greater the importance of the tribe's herd, the more the woman was regarded as a servant with even less value than the livestock, and the wider was the gulf that opened between the sexes.' Kollontai goes on to state that rape was common practice in these nomadic, warlike tribes. Forced marriage set its seal upon a whole epoch in the history of humanity. It undoubtedly helped to reinforce women's inferior position When a woman was captured by a foreign tribe, she quite evidently lost her egalitarian rights.'10

Especially interesting here is the fact that Kollontai not only questions the one-sided theory of matriarchy advanced by Engels, but demonstrates the way in which the specific oppression of women takes root in primitive societies. Thus, she refuses to employ the traditional formulae according to which 'the origins of oppression are bound up with the emergence of the family and private property'. Some investigators make a mistake, she writes, 'when they attribute the final loss of women's rights to the forms of marriage: it is not the marriage form, but above all women's economic role that brought them to a position of dependence in the nomadic tribes of herdsmen.' The proof she sees in the fact that capture did not carry the same consequences for the women of certain agricultural tribes. (She was thinking particularly of Ancient Rome, where women were held in respect as long as the agrarian subsistence society remained the dominant system.)

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Kollontai, Du Situation der Fran . . ., op cit., p. 17.

Ibid., p 23.

¹⁶ Tbid , p 26.

¹¹ Loc cit.

period marked by primitive communism, noting also the long transition which preceded the emergence of an economic system based on private property, exchange and trade, and which led to the division of society into classes. What consequences did the appearance of private property entail for the position of women? Many are of the opinion that female servitude and inferiority appear together with the introduction of private property. But this is false. Private property did involve the reduction of women to a state of dependence, but only where they had already lost their role in production as a result of the division of labour . . From a formal point of view, this marked a turning-point in the process whereby woman was gradually cut off from productive labour. However, that hadalready begun to happen under primitive communism." She here contrasts the situation of women in Egypt with the very different place they occupied in Greece during the same period. In Egypt, the predominance of agriculture had maintained for women an important role in society, and hence significant rights and privileges. (Of course this was in the context of a caste-system in which neither male nor female slaves had any rights at all.) Greek women, however, even when they belonged to the highest social layers, had been deprived of all rights as soon as commodity production overtook subsistence agriculture in the economy of the peninsula. Kollontai next reviews the situation in various regions just before, and in the early stages of the Christian era. In doing so, she gives evidence of remarkable erudition—undoubtedly the fruit of research she had been able to conduct during her travels in ten years of exile.

Two things are of interest here: first, the emphasis placed on the concept of transition, representing a notable refinement of Marxist analysis at a time when few studies were being devoted to this subject; secondly, the failure to challenge the statements of Marx and Engels according to which the emergence of private property entailed the expulsion of women from production (see, for example, the following pungent assertion: 'For thousands of years, women were relegated to the four walls of their home, excluded from all productive labour.'). Thus, Kollontai makes no distinction between women from the most exploited layers who never ceased to participate in (above all rural) productive labour, and women from upper layers whose enclosure was accompanied with greater or lesser idleness according to their status within precapitalist class societies. This lacuna may appear all the more astonishing in that Kollontai minutely describes the juridical differences in the position of women of various classes. But her erroneous thesis derives from a wish to show at all costs that women's status in society is related above all else, indeed almost exclusively, to their role in the economy. Instead of emphasizing that the trend to enclosure and loss of economic independence was bound up with the emerging monogamous familywhich by no means excludes women's participation in productive labour-Kollontai falls into the trap of schematic analysis.

The Middle Ages

However, Kollontal corrects this judgement in the next two lectures,

¹⁹ Ibid , pp. 31 and 33

epoch stretching over ten centuries which affords a perfect example of a transition period. Here, the bare criterion of participation in production cannot account for the specific rights and oppression of women. In the framework of an autarchic economy, the role played by the chatelaine was undoubtedly of considerable importance in time of war between rival fiefdoms: it was often she who replaced the absent master in dealings with his subjects, deciding on the various measures to be taken. She also represented an authority at the medical and cultural level, being familiar with the powers of plants and knowing how to treat the sick. In some cases, she even had the right of inheritance. And yet, as an individual, she remained at the mercy of her husband, who had the power of life and death over her when she was accused of adultery. To be sure, between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, the women of the nobility often enjoyed a high cultural level thanks to the education lavished upon them in the convent. But since the knights were then constantly at war, and thus in most cases illiterate, it was logical that a number of privileges should fall to their wives.13

In fact, this period produced many renowned women writers and philosophers, doctors and political figures. (Kollontai recalls the feats performed by a series of abbesses or women of the upper nobility, whose fame stretched far beyond their country of origin.) Nevertheless, a popular writer like Barberino could say in the fourteenth century in Italy: Young women should conduct themselves with dignity, that is, they should stay at home and help their mother with the housework." Barberino even considered that women might spare themselves the trouble of learning to read and write—advice similar to that given by the Russian priest Sylvester in his book Domestic Rules.14 At any event, the women celebrated for various roles in society were the exception rather than the rule. It was for economic reasons that these women had acquired their education. Their right to culture and science can only be explained by their role in a closed economy . . . As the latter disappears, together with the subsistence economy upon which it rested, so does the cultural level of upper-class women undergo rapid decline." Thus, Kollontai depicts a contradictory process, involving, on the one hand, a growing tendency for noblewomen to be confined to the home and, on the other hand, the retention of a number of freedoms as a function of the economic situation and in accordance with the region and epoch.

The same process applies to peasant women. Only we cannot speak of 'rights' in their case: for, just like the men of their class, they were at the mercy of the master who owned both the land and the serfs attached to it. Here too, however, we cannot content ourselves with noting that a peasant woman suffered dual oppression. Her master did indeed have the just

¹³ The situation in Quebec was somewhat similar until the 1950s, when highly advanced technological processes were introduced in the forestry sector, causing a massive drift of the peasant population towards the towns. Before then, the needs of the household economy often entailed that the woman had a higher level of education than the man. For she was the one responsible for keeping the accounts and knowing how to read and write, while the man devoted himself mainly to his job as wood-cutter.

¹⁴ Kollontai, op cit, pp. 50 and 54

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 56.

having the right to drive her out or sell her on the market-place. But it should be pointed out that, although the peasant marriage was affected by financial considerations after the appearance of private property, and although collective rapes were perpetrated by noblemen in the villages, peasant women often retained certain community prerogatives because of their sole as the crucial labour force. (Kollontai mentions as an example the fact that, until very recent times, women had participated in mir assemblies in certain areas of Russia, even though they had no rights whatever in private life.) Both for this reason, and because the question of virginity was not posed in the way that it was for nobles, the peasant woman enjoyed markedly greater freedom in choosing a husband. The peasantry had nothing to inherit, so much less importance was attached to 'the purity of the stock'.

As regards the women of the nascent urban bourgeoisie, the situation was still more complex. We must first distinguish between merchants' wives and women-artisans or wives of artisans. The former were devoid of all rights. They played no role at the economic level as long as re-selling foreign produce formed the core of their husbands' labour and necessitated a degree of mobility and autonomy inaccessible to themselves (goods produced in the town or region being directly marketed by the producer with no commercial intermediary); while in a later period, they played an altogether secondary role directing household labour or, at the very most, working behind the shop cash-desk.

The situation was quite different in the case of the artisan's wife. Given that the artisan's income depended on the amount of commodities produced by his own hands, he tended to enlist the rest of the family, both wife and children. Women entered the profession themselves and even came to dominate certain guilds between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries (weaving, lace-making, purse and stocking production, etc.). They were also to be found in great numbers among café-proprietors, hairdressers and launderers. This activity secured them rights unknown to women of other social layers: for example, they could inherit their husband's workshop, and widows or spinsters enjoyed a degree of individual freedom that was linked with their economic independence. We should not engage in myth-making, however, for such women had no autonomy within the family framework; and there was already a tendency to use maternity as a pretext for discriminating against the rights of female artisans, whenever their labour became competitive with that of the men. What of the spinsters and widows who, having lost the 'protection' of a husband, father or brother killed on the battlefield during one of the constant wars, moved to the town in order to escape the tyranny of feudal lords? In reality, their lot was scarcely to be envied once unemployment appeared with early manufacturing. Not only did the competition of manufactured goods first affect those craft sectors in which women were most numerous (textiles, etc.), but they contributed to the expulsion ofwomen from all existing guilds. There were only two alternatives for unmarried women: either the factory-cloister or prostitution. Far from being an idyllic period in which townswomen enjoyed all manner of rights, the Middle Ages appear as a barbaric epoch in which women were regarded as sinful objects and inferior beings, exposed to persecution by

who showed signs of knowledge 'incompatible with their sex' and who could therefore only be instruments of the devil. Forced to sell their bodies, they were still hunted down in the name of a double morality.

Clearly, Kollontai made a careful study of the Middle Ages, providing a wealth of documentation that constitutes the principal interest of her third and fourth lectures. Studded as it is with precise examples, her argument reveals an astonishing knowledge of European peoples and literature. But in this case too, her conclusions underline only the economic elements determining the lack of women's rights. 'Although many women were able to satisfy their needs, the great majority remained in a state of oppression, dependent on the man and alone responsible for housekeeping. These women performed labour of secondary importance to the economy, and so it was only to be expected that women artisans and guild-members should not in every respect be the equals of their husbands or brothers. They could not obtain equal rights as members of society as long as the majority of women (or at least an important section) did not produce commodities or perform labour of use to the whole population.716 Not seeking to analyse more closely the process of enclosure in the family, Kollontai neglects an important determinant of women's contradictory position in the development of capitalism.17

The Effects of Capitalist Development

The aim of Kollontai's fifth lecture is to show how the situation of women from the poorest layers evolved during the period of developing commodity production up to the advent of capitalism. Once again, she lays stress on the notion of transition: 'Capitalism did not appear overnight in the form we know today ..., but began through a process of concentration of capital, both in commerce (merchant capital then being the source of greatest profit) and in manufacture.'18 She also emphasizes the uneven development of this process in the various countries concerned: subsistence economy, elimination of which is a premiss of the struggle between feudalism and capitalism, had all but disappeared in Italy by the late twelfth century, whereas it persisted in Germany and Russia until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively. She demonstrates that, although the system of manufacture made it possible to raise productivity to a level incomparably higher than that achieved by handicraft labour, the employers' interest in having the cheapest possible labour-power quite naturally led them to hire women with no qualifications. Many 'houses of God' closed their doors with the onset of manufacture, providing an invaluable and badly needed reservoir of super-exploited women. These were then forced to work between fourteen and eighteen hours a day, in order to secure a return on the investment in machinery.

At the same time, Kollontai shows how the generalization of home-based

18 Kollonta, op cit, p. 75.

¹⁶ Ibid , p 67.

¹⁷ See A. Artous, 'Système capitaliste et oppression des femmes', in Critique Communiste (special number: Frances, Capitalisme, Moseument Ouerrer), 1978

transition to proletarian wage-labour. Although home-based labour normally also involved working fourteen or fifteen hours a day for a mere pittance, women infinitely preferred it to factory labour, which was seen as a kind of prostitution. It is not that female home-workers had more rights than their sisters-in-misery—indeed, they had often lost the little consideration that women artisans enjoyed. But the very image of womanhood sown by their whole education made them look with horror on the need to work outside the home. And yet 'manufacture was borr out of home-based labour and, in reality, simply gathered under one roof formerly dispersed male and female home-workers.' 19

In keeping with the analyses of previous chapters, Kollontai here pays only scant attention to the reasons why female home-workers with nothing much to lose still displayed such resistance. She does point out that, during this same epoch, a number of women from the bourgeoisie and nobility grasped hold of the underlying theses of Protestantism, in order to claim their rights as individuals and assert themselves in the field of culture, science or theology. Yet she does not examine the connection between wage-labour and housework for one group of women, or between intellectual activity and the family for the other group. All she does is state that 'during the period of manufacture, only a minority of women worked in production. The woman who was forced to sell her labour-power and fall into the clutches of capital was not yet a typical phenomenon. Such women never stopped hoping that they might one day return to a normal life and take care of the house or farm in the traditional manner. 20 This aspiration is partly explained by the low wages of unskilled labour and by the often described working conditions in the factory. But does it not also derive from the fact that the woman's wage was considered as topping-up money?

Even when women's and children's wages were crucial to family survival, as they were in Britain around the 1840s and in other periods of super-exploitation, most workers continued to regard female labour as a scourge. In fact, Kollontai states in her sixth lecture that it was seen in this way, specifying that male workers recognized women's labour as an irreversible aspect of capitalist development only at a very late stage. She mentions in passing that 'most often, the organizations which should have defended the interests of the proletariat as a whole refused to admit women to their ranks'. ²¹ But she immediately adds that things changed radically with the growth of female employment in production:

¹⁹ Ibid., p 92 It should be noted that the characteristics of the home-based labour of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries have remained the same in the twentieth century, wherever that form appears. This is especially so in southern Italy. See a number of recent studies, including those in the trade-union journal of the Italian con. Raingua Studiesals, No. 54–5, May 1975, and M.-A. Macciocchi, Letters from minds the Italian Communist Party, Nile 1973, where the author describes the mechanisms of home-based labour, the way in which women assimilate it to housework, and so on In 1976, for the first time in history, a number of female home-workers who had lost their jobs joined unemployed workers' committees in Naples, followed by housewives who had never been employed. They thereby showed understanding of the fact that their different situations resulted from a deliberate capitalist policy and from their own complete lack of training.

Kollontu, op cit, p. 94.

¹¹ Ibid., p 104

an accidental character, became a normal and necessary condition . . . With time, this recognition forced the working class to revise its position with regard to women: it eventually accepted them as comrades and full members of its fighting organizations.'22 Basing herself on figures which showed a marked rise in female wage-earners in every capitalist country (39 per cent of the total female population of France economically active in 1906, 23 per cent of women engaged in production in Germany in 1906, and so on), Kollontai concludes: In the higher phase of capitalist development, the woman is no longer a mere appendage of the man. She has ceased to perform only unproductive domestic labour, and that is why the end of her age-old slavery is on the horizon.'22 Referring to the fact that nearly half of women workers are married in the capitalist countries, she adds: 'Motherhood and an occupation (i.e. female participation in productive labour) are in fact completely irreconcilable under the capitalist system. The producer's family dissolves, the children are left to their own devices, and the home falls into neglect."24

Kollontai makes the point that productive labour has deplorable consequences for women's health, presenting as it does the dual task of housework and wage-labour. But she counts on the fact that once workers' families cross the poverty threshold, their needs develop, finding expression in increased demands at the social level. She concludes superbly: It is no longer possible to turn the clock back... What indeed can a woman hope to find in the family, when many of its traditional functions have long been assumed by institutions lying outside the family?

The final proof of this trend is supposedly the upheaval in the traditional division of labour. Thus, while recognizing that most women are active in branches that require no training (textiles, tobacco, chemicals, commerce), Kollontai adds: 'Still, it is significant that as these sectors are transformed through the mechanization of labour (electric or steam laundries, factory-made clothes, etc.), the female labour-force is supplanted by male colleagues, even in typically women's occupations. The two labour-forces are redistributed, men infiltrating traditionally female sectors, and women entering occupations that always used to be regarded as male preserves. Such redistribution has one and the same cause: the mechanization of production . . . It is this which leads to an equal position for men and women, and hence to recognition of their social equality . . . Women have learnt to regard their labour as necessary.'25

These quotations clearly express the way in which Kollontai overestimates the proletarianization of women: with regard not only to the rhythm of the process, but above all to the degree of conscious challenging of the family that it involves among working-class men and women. Subsequent events, both in the user and in the advanced

¹² Ibid., p. 105.

[■] Ibid , p 107

Loc cit

[■] Ibid , p 109

[■] Ibid., p 110.

bearing in mind that she advanced them in 1921, we cannot but pose a number of questions. No doubt the proletarianization of women had speeded up—especially during the First World War; but it was also possible to observe a parallel stabilization of the family structure. It is perfectly understandable that Marx and Engels, being deeply affected by the living conditions of the proletariat between 1840 and 1870, should have speculated about the coming dissolution of the family. (One thinks here of the fifteen or more hours of the working day, the hunger and infant mortality, the average worker's life expectancy of little more than thirty to thirty-five years, the housing conditions in which eight to ten people shared a single room, and so on.) Kollontai's statements on the other hand, are more a declaration of faith than anything else.

On the Threshold of Equality

Nevertheless, this is a driving idea to be found throughout the final part of Kollontai's course: above all in the seventh, eighth and ninth lectures, where she deals with the early women's movements, the positions taken by the suffragettes and the struggle to be waged against them, the role played by women during the First World War, and so on. On several occasions, she asserts that 'under the capitalist system, whether or not they are involved in production, women will never be able to impose their complete liberation or obtain equal rights with men'. Indeed, as could be seen during the First World War, their position actually gets worse. For 'under the domination of capital, wage-labour does not count and only the "organizer's" labour is worthy of attention . . . The problem of women's labour cannot be resolved as long as the spectre of unemployment holds sway." Such warnings punctuate Kollontai's exposition, as if she feared being carried too far in her enthusiasm. Standing out far more prominently, however, is her assertion that, with or without capitalism, the development of the productive forces has reached a turning-point from which there is no going back. To feminists who demand 'the right to work', she ironically replies: 'Long before the feminists expressed it, this demand was realized by millions of women . . . Poor women in the lowest social position would struggle for this right, while bourgeois women still considered it shameful to have to work." What she does not examine is the type of work obtained by women and the way in which it is reconciled with their domestic tasks. We shall return to these points when we take up her analysis of the division of labour.

Kollontai's optimism concerning the process of redistribution of productive tasks between men and women, as well as the process whereby outside institutions take responsibility for the social needs of the family even within the capitalist system itself, expresses an idealist conception of the evolution of women's place in society. Very often she falls into a narrowly quantitative view—in particular, when she states that the denial of female suffrage is 'evidently untenable in the long run', given the millions of women earning their own living—who are yet

¹⁷ Ibid , p. 112

^{*} Ibid , pp. 157 and 165

[⇒] Ibid., p. 135

stressed, however, that the voluntarism exhibited by Kollontai was inserted into the general concept of the period which the Bolsheviks had until 1920. The documents of both the First and Second Congresses of the Communist International are based on the view that humanity has just entered a period of crises, wars and revolutions; that capitalism is falling apart at the seams; and that the establishment of soviets is everywhere on the agenda. It was thus a leftist vision which hinged on the idea 'that the struggle for power had irreversibly become an immediate and constant datum of the class struggle'.31

Corrections began to be made in Soviet Russia in early 1921, with the introduction of the NEP at the Tenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party in March, and with the theses of the Third Comintern Congress in June. These decisions took account of the failure of the great strike-waves in France, Britain and Italy, and above all the German defeat of March 1921, coming at the same time as the Red Army's reversal before Warsaw. When Kollontai was giving her talks at Sverdlov University, the Bolshevik ranks were beginning to assimilate the idea that revolution is consolidated over a period of time, and that the bourgeois counteroffensive has to be met with the tactic of the workers' united front. However, we should not forget that Kollontai, at the head of the Workers' Opposition, had come out against the NEP retreat. The majority of the Bolshevik leadership, taking stock of the international situation and the weakening of the proletarian vanguard in the usse, 32 had advocated the reintroduction of certain measures that conflicted with previously held principles: substitution of a progressive tax in kind for a policy of requisition; restoration of the freedom to trade and reemergence of a legal market; return to a money-based economy; toleration of small and medium-sized private industry; and an appeal for foreign investment under the control of the State.33 These positions were adopted by the Tenth Party Congress, despite the opposition of many trade-union leaders. In the name of democracy and the role that workers ought to play in controlling the economy, Kollontai and her group attacked the proposed policy change—both as it affected the role of the unions and their links with the Party, and as it concerned the orientation on the economic plane.

In hindsight, it is evident that when the Workers' Opposition criticized

As is well known, women won the right to vote following the First World War in a number of countries such as Germany, Great Britain and the United States But it was only after the Second World War that female suffrage was gained in France, where the percentage of women in the active population had been very high since the beginning of the century. And this is to say nothing of Swiss women, who only obtained the right to vote in national elections in 1970, and who are still disenfranchised at local level following a recent referendum in certain cantons.

²¹ See Daniel Bensaid, La Révolution et le Paureur, Paris 1975, pp. 299-328

^{*} See Pierre Broué, La Parti bakhenqui, Paris 1971, chapter 7, pp. 148-69.

^{**}The result is a state of equilibrium which, although highly unstable and precarious, enables the Socialist Republic to exist—not for long, of course—within the capitalist encirclement.' (Lenin, 'Theses for a Report on the Tacrics of the R.C.P.', Selected Works, Vol. 3, Moscow 1971, p. 622.)

complete trade-union submission to the Party, they were pointing to a reality that was to be recognized from 1922 onwards by several Bolshevik leaders, first and foremost by Lenin and Trotsky. Nonetheless, the proposals contained in the Workers' Opposition platform of January 1921 fail to appreciate the gravity of the objective situation. Thus in her June 1921 course at Sverdlov University, Kollontai makes certain prognoses that would undoubtedly not have been supported by Bolshevik economists: 'The tendencies of economic developments are such that an excess of labour does not seem a possibility. Humanity is still a long way from a state of abundance . . . And as long as the need for labour-power increases, the demand for female labour will also constantly increase . . . In the twentieth century, women's labour has come to represent an important part of production: there is no convincing reason for us to reckon with the disappearance of those factors which triggered off the rise in the female work-force.'35

Sticking to the forecasts made by the revolutionary movement in the preceding period, Kollontai asserts that capitalism has reached breakingpoint and that the victory of socialist revolution in Russia has finally. thrown it off balance. As with the Workers' Opposition as a whole, this over-estimation of the rhythm at which the capitalist crisis was developing goes hand in hand with an under-estimation of the difficulties which the Russian proletariat would have to face, in pursuing and completing the process unleashed by the seizure of power. Thus, it is in a highly subjectivist manner that the Workers' Opposition platform grasps. the phenomenon of bureaucracy—regarding it as the expression of the growing presence within the government apparatus of individuals alien to the goals of communism, rather than as the result of certain objective factors (scarcity, famine, the disappearance of many revolutionary cadres, the cultural and political backwardness of the peasantry, and so on). Far from allowing the redistribution of productive tasks which Kollontai saw already beginning under capitalism, such a situation could not but perpetuate the social division of labour and strengthen the phenomenon. of bureaucracy."

Ambiguous Conception

It is important to emphasize this point, for it reveals a general deficiency in Kollontai's analysis of women's oppression—namely, the minor significance which she attaches to the social division of labour and to the way in which it is combined, for women, with their massive entry into

36 Kollontai, Dre Situation der Fran ., op cit, p 142

³⁴ See Kollontu's January 1921 pamphlet 'The Workers' Opposition' in Solected Writings (ed. and trans. Alix Holt), London 1977

^{**}The ultimate source of bureaucratization lies in the social division of labour—that is to say, in the workers' lack of knowledge, skills, initiative, culture and social activity' Emest Mandel, 'Introduction' to the anthology Contribe sourcer, Consult sourcers, Assignation, Paris 1970, p. 35 See also the pamphlet 'Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat', Toronto 1977 (resolution adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International), and the chapter on Rudolf Bahro's Die Alternative in Errest Mandel, From Stalinism to Eurocommunism, NLB 1978

role in society? Perhaps so. In any case, her conception is more than ambiguous, at least for feminists of the late twentieth century. On the one hand, she emphasizes throughout her lectures that women's economic role is crucial to their recognition as full members of society. But on the other hand, she frequently lays stress on biological differences between the sexes and on the fundamental social role of women as mothers and educators. 'Only a free, conscious woman can be a good mother capable of teaching her children their civic duties and a genuine love of freedom. 737 It is as if the task of child-rearing necessarily fell to the woman alone—although she does argue, of course, that it is necessary to demand the socialization of certain tasks, so that this function may be fulfilled. No questions are, therefore, posed about the division of tasks within the family—whether or not there are sufficient crèches—or about its implications with regard to the woman's availability for these tasks, her occupational training, and her access to positions of responsibility. Nor does Kollontai 23k why the trade unions put up so much resistance to the entry of women into their ranks. She observes that 'whenever women workers penetrated a new sector of production, they had great difficulty in gaining comradely behaviour on the part of their class brothers'; 38 and she makes clear that, in many cases, the women were obliged to form their own unions, given the men's refusal to accept them. But she sees an objective reason for this attitude in the women's lack of training, which the bosses effectively used to drive down wages: the men's reaction in seeking to protect their gains is thus easily understandable.

More generally, Kollontai displays unparalleled optimism concerning the future development of the trade unions. Without speaking of the working-class vanguard—the socialists, who understood from the start the importance of fighting for women's liberation—she takes the view that 'unionized workers' as a whole 'are now striving to win women to their organizations'. Not only the workers' organizations, but the socialist political parties as well, have adopted the demand for equal pay. Thanks to Marx and Engels, Marxists now dispose of a scientific theory with which to answer utopian-socialist questions on the problems of oppression within the family, double moral standards, etc.—a theory which shows that 'the extension of female labour and of women's exploitation by capital stems from the process of concentration at work in the system of capitalist production';40 and that it is at this level that the struggle has initially to be waged. The First International understood this at once: 'It recognized that women's labour is inevitable, and it defended the position of women as mothers while demanding legal reform that would allow their labour-power and health to be protected.' This onesided way of posing things⁴¹ is perhaps rooted in Kollontai's wish, for reasons mentioned in the introduction to this article, not to attack headon the often reactionary attitude of the workers' organizations. (In several of her previous writings, she had made no bones about doing

³⁷ Kollontsu, op cit., p 133.

[™] Ibid , p. 141

[⇒] Ibid, p 142.

⁴⁰ Ibid , p. 144

⁴¹ See Jacqueline Heinen, 'De la rere à la III^e Internationale, la question des femmes', Critique Communité, op cit., pp. 109-81.

assessment of the rising proportion of women in the unions and the workers' parties: 'By their practical and theoretical activity, a number of such women have become paragons of socialist revolution... The stronger the revolutionary workers' movement and the more it raises its own goals, the more the women's movement will identify with it and the easier, it will be to break the Gordian knot of the "woman question" which bourgeois society has so miserably failed to touch.'43

Clearly, Kollontai's optimistic vision concerning the triumphal advance of socialist revolution and the way in which it will solve the specific oppression of women is here based on an under-estimation of certainobjective factors. Above all, she under-estimates the difficulties then faced by the working class of the advanced capitalist countries in resisting the bourgeois attacks that followed its various defeats on the plane of struggle. Next, and not entirely as a result of the latter, she underestimates the resistance of the workers' movement to the idea that the struggle for women's liberation should be an integral part of the battle being waged to overthrow the bourgeois state. So wrong is her emphasis, that she refers first of all to women's political backwardness in order to explain their difficulty in actively taking part in the struggle.44 And when she tries to locate the factors underlying certain steps back (in particular, women's return to the home after the First World War), she focuses on the bosses' wish to avoid confronting the workers' movement at the height of a revolutionary upsurge—even though, at other times, they would certainly have preferred to retain a flexible work-force, composed of women who could be subjected to unrestrained exploitation. What Kollontai does not explain is why the workers' movement did not oppose sending women back to the home; why most male workers thought it quite normal that the available jobs should return to them as a right; and why many women also continued to prioritize their domestic tasks.

This brings us back to Kollontai's failure to analyse seriously the social division of labour and the division of tasks within the family, stemming from the status attributed to women in capitalist society. In the passage examining the position of women workers during the First World War—when they made up the majority of the work-force, even in traditionally male sectors—Kollontai never really tackles the question of domestic labour. She describes in detail the super-exploitation suffered by women (piece-work, starvation wages very often a third of men's wages, a twelve- to fourteen-hour day, extremely high infant mortality due to the appalling work conditions, endless food-queues, undernourishment, and so on). But while naturally explaining this in terms of women's lack of skills, and a low level of organization that left them unable to defend

Especially in The New Morality and the Working Class (op. cit.), where she criticizes the way in which socialists put off the solution of sexual problems to future society, or in the introduction to her pamphlet Womes Workers Stringle for their Rights (Bristol 1973), first published in 1918 and containing a number of pre-war articles. In this latter work, she stresses the difficulty of the struggle within the Bolshevik Party itself, mentioning the long resistance to her demand that agitation and propaganda work should be directed to women workers. She also underlines the lack of propaganda material which forced her to republish such old texts.

Kollontal, Die Situation der Fran . , op. cit , pp 146 and 148

⁴⁴ Women Workers Struggle for their Rights (op. cit.), p. 12.

Otherwise, how could she return so often in her talks to the fact that 'women's labour is becoming more and more superfluous for the family, both at the national economic level, and from the point of view of the family itself'. She does, it is true, recognize that the position of women cannot change fundamentally in the framework of the capitalist system. But she has great confidence in the bright future—'in the capacity of the proletariat to resolve these difficulties' once the economic, social and political system is transformed. Even men well-disposed towards women cannot do very much to end their oppression as long as the power of capital has not been broken.' She draws this conclusion after barely touching on the question of women's organization and on what they themselves can do here and now to begin to break their chains.

The Social Division of Labour

In the last five lectures (10 to 14), which confirm this view of things, Kollontai raises the problem of the transition period. Her aim is to take up with the comrades listening to her such important questions as the socialization of house-work, the protection of working women and mothers, and the changes necessary in everyday life in order to advance towards socialism and the elimination of all inequality. We shall not dwell here on Kollontai's many positive proposals, 47 but rather discuss how the gaps in her analysis of women's position under capitalism reappear with added force in her treatment of the tasks of the revolutionary party following the seizure of power. Thus, her mistaken assessment of the rhythm of socialist development leads her to an over-optimistic and onesided view of the trend in female productive employment. She stresses that the percentage of women in the total industrial work-force rose from 32 to 42 per cent between 1914 and 1918, and that women outnumber men in six sectors of industry (whereas, at the turn of the century, only 8 per cent of women were economically active). But she does not say that, among women working in 1921 (about 30 per cent of the active population), nearly 90 per cent were peasants. And, as she points out in another connection: 'The situation of women peasants has undergone no essential change, for household economy continues to prevail in the agricultural population.' Here is a false picture of the situation of women workers in the ussr, given that most of her examples of positive change refer to the urban population.

Similarly, in stating that the average wage is nearly equal for men and women in the Moscow region, she does not make clear that these figures only cover typically female sectors, and that real inequality persists because of the low representation of women in well-paid sectors. This does not help to spotlight the battle that has to be waged for the training and participation of women in every sector of the economy—a field in which, as we have seen, her views are rather far removed from reality. Her repeated observations to the effect that the family 'can no longer exist in its current form, once it ceases to be an economic unit of capitalist society'

⁴⁵ Die Situation der Fran . , op. cit., p. 126.

⁴ Ibid., 167

⁴⁷ Ibid. And see Heinen, op cit.

the point of disappearing, and why she adopts such a harsh tone with housewives who still let themselves be kept by their husbands (even using the term 'whore' in describing their attitude). Although she is right to underline that prostitution is intimately related to the economic position of women, it is hard to see why she is so quick to announce victory. After all, it was Kollontai herself who waged a major battle on this questionboth before and during the first three years of the socialist régimeshowing how crucial is women's economic independence in eliminating this typical product of the wretched place of women workers under the capitalist system. How could she imagine that prostitution had really disappeared, when the gravity of the economic crisis had forced the NEP retreat, and when all contemporary accounts speak of famine in the towns?48 Does her assertion not flow from that voluntarist logic which makes her say a little further on: With the involvement of women on the two main fronts—labour and the Red Army—the last prejudices against women died away '?

However, it is above all with regard to the division of tasks in the family, and society that these final lectures fail to achieve their aim of politically, arming the women workers and peasants who attended. Kollontai's vision of a disintegrating family prevents her from seeing that the persistence of divisions, both at work and in household tasks, requires a resolute struggle and organized discussion with the most conscious women in order to find the best means of tackling the problem. In certain respects, moreover, she exhibits a highly traditionalist conception of women's role in society: the view suggested by her frequent talk of woman 'as a mother and educator' is confirmed by her discussion of the goals of the socialist republic. After evoking the growing number of communes that allow women to be relieved of certain tasks, she adds: But the decline of unproductive female labour within the domestic economy is only one aspect of women's emancipation. For when all is said and done, it is still the woman who is responsible for the care and upbringing of children—a situation that glues her to the home and enslaves her to the family. Soviet power not only protects the social function of maternity; it also relieves the mother by making society responsible for child-rearing.'44

In other words, there is no challenge to traditional roles. Indeed, she says elsewhere that crèches are needed in order to raise the labour productivity of women: 'For it is only to be expected that they should be less careful in their work: men can sleep at night without being disturbed and they do not have to occupy themselves with various family tasks.'50 In case the meaning of these lines is still unclear, she removes all doubt with her repeated statements on the need 'to protect women's innate maternal instinct', and her violent, moralistic reproaches against women who refuse to breast-feed their babies. All the sections dealing with protection

^{**}Referring to the situation in 1919, and more generally to the period until 1923, Victor Serge writes: Prostitution never disappeared.' (Year One of the Raiman Revelution, London 1972, p 364.) This is confirmed by Alfred Rosmer in Lenin's Marrow, London 1971, and by numerous other writings on the period

Mollontal, op. cit, p. 199

[■] Ibid , p. 173.

subject. Whether it is a question of maternity leave, of prohibiting nightwork for women (limited to seven hours in the case of men), of establishing creches, canteens and post-natal rest homes—everything is motivated in terms of increased productivity. 'Our Soviet Republic has the duty to ensure that women's labour-power is not expended on unproductive housework or child-rearing, but judiciously devoted to the creation of new social wealth.'51

Even when discussing abortion, Kollontai gives similar explanations and leaves us feeling rather nonplussed. Attacking bourgeois women who have abortions 'out of selfishness and love of comfort', she adds that abortion should be legalized because it is hypocritical not to recognize that women in the worst straits will end their pregnancies in the ussa as they do in all other countries. 'Having recourse to back-street abortionists destroys our women's health, so that, at least for a time, they become a burden on the workers' state as a whole and lower the pool of labour.' Not a word about the right of women to have an abortion!

Kollontai's conception of the role of women is further confirmed by the way in which she tackles the problem of child-parent (in reality, child-mother) relations, and the question of communal-type living. For her, child-care institutions should be 'under the control of the mothers themselves, since they have to take a regular part in kindergarten activities'. The work of cleaning the communes 'will be done by employed charwomen'—just as, in another pamphlet, 'armies of women-cooks' will relieve women of their kitchen-tasks under communism. *2 'As regards collective living, it will again be economic realism that takes precedence over other considerations.' For Kollontai, it is a question not of indulging in utopian dreams, but of understanding that if people want to live communally, 'it is because they can live better and more comfortably than in a private house. Communes receive enough wood and electricity; most have a communal kitchen and boiler, and so on.' *45

This productivist vision is not, we should be quite clear, peculiar to Kollontai. If we study texts of this epoch dealing with child-care, we find that most exhibit the same lack of concern for affective relations, for the dimension specific to collective relations, and for their possible effects on the development of the personality. Of course, we must always place these views in their historical context: economic constraints had brought back to harsh reality a woman like Kollontai who, before the Revolution, had dreamt a good deal about personal relations in a different system.

⁵¹ Ibid., p 207.

M See the 1918 mass pamphlet The Family, the State and Communism, reprinted in Quatrolme Internationals, March-April 1973.

Kollontai, Die Situation der Fran..., op cit, p 197

M Not being able to develop the point here, I refer the reader to the anthology of Daniel Lindenbergh, L'internationale communite et l'école de classe, Paris 1972. Part four contains many contemporary texts, including an extract by Blonski—which is by no means the most rightist and productivist—where he argues that only socially useful labour has an educational value, since it alone contributes to social well-being and hance awakens communist conscioueness (The whole text 'L'atelier de fabrique et la fabrique, voilà l'école du travail pour la jeunesse' appears in T. Dietrich, Pédagges incelists, Paris 1975—a work which also deals with this epoch and gives numerous quotations.)

immediate tasks, but the fact that she treats so lightly the problem of resistance. In fact, not only in the working class and peasantry, but also in the Party itself, there was considerable resistance to the idea that it is necessary to engage in a struggle for women's liberation. But all Kollontai does is mention in passing—in the final section of the course—that the Central Committee Women's Commission met very determined opposition from delegates to the Eighth Party Congress (1919) when it submitted a resolution on the importance of involving women workers and peasants in the councils of every sector of production. The resolution was eventually carried only after a male comrade with some weight in the leadership had made a strong intervention in the discussion. (Even so, Kollontai points out, women's participation in these bodies still remained very weak two years later.)

What is also astonishing is Kollontai's acceptance of a certain division of tasks-not only because of short-term economic imperatives, but apparently as a long-term prospect. At least this is what emerges from the fourteenth and concluding lecture, where she deals with the perspectives and tasks awaiting the women-militants present. Stressing that women have so far tended to take jobs close to their everyday concerns as mothers and housewives (jobs in the social services, education, canteenorganization, the health sector, and so on), she concludes that there is a 'natural division of labour's one which 'does not split the proletariat into two along sex lines, but which on the contrary leads to a perfectly normal and acceptable strengthening of initiative in the various social fields'. We can certainly understand her statement: It is a fact that, in the present period, women spontaneously base themselves on experience in order to take part in developing new life-styles and changing consciousness.' But after all she has said about the disappearance of the family and the virtual attainment of equality between men and women, we find it harder to understand the continuation: In the current phase of the dictatorship of the proletariat, more than ever before, proletarian women cannot engage in a struggle for the abstract principles of feminism: that is to say, for some abstract equality. Serious planning in Soviet Russia must take account of women's moral and physical capacities, allocating tasks between the sexes in such a way that the plan should best be able to serve the collective interests . . . The workers' state must never forget that women are not just a labour force, and that they also have a function to fulfil as mothers.' What should we conclude from the lack of all reference to a later battle to redistribute roles in society and the family, as well as in production? What else, if not that Kollontai's conception of the social and sexual division of labour is far removed from that which we can develop today?

In the introduction to Womes Workers Straggle for their Rights (op. cit.), Kollontal argues that this division of labour has nothing to do with maintaining woman's traditional place in the family, nor with the importance of housework. She also blames the Party for not having understood earlier 'that housework was disappearing, and that the transition to state childcare was a practical, topical and immediate problem'. Instead, the Party 'considered these matters to involve a long-term historical tendency'. The 'natural' division of hisour to which she refers thus apparently derives from a division determined by biological differences.

Kollontai's 1921 lectures should not obscure the historical context in which they were inserted. The lack of contraceptive facilities, the poor knowledge of psycho-analysis, the still embryonic development of mechanization (which has now reached the point where much housekeeping activity is redundant)—all these factors allow us better to understand the content and limitations of Kollontai's theories. If I have stressed their deficiencies more than her positive contributions to the subject of sexuality, it is because this latter part of her work is more widely known. Given the current evolution of the women's movement, I thought it useful to draw out both the elements of continuity linking us with twenties feminism and those aspects which can and should be surpassed. The explosive social crisis and the women's radicalization of the last decade or so pose a number of new questions to which we must give an answer. Nevertheless, fifty years ago, Kollontai was among those who went furthest in understanding the problems related to women's liberation.

Translated by Patrick Camiller

See Heinen, op cit

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The 'Crisis of the Seventeenth Century'

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It is clear that the seventeenth century—with a worldeconomy larger than it had been in the sixteenth—saw a new division of wealth, under the banner of a many-sided competition, unfettered by loyalty, ferocious and premeditated, since decline and stagnation were poor counsellors: nothing was yielded, everything taken that could be taken, whether from neighbour or from distant rival.

> F Braudel, P Jeannin, J Meuvret, R Romano¹

start with a world-system perspective on underdevelopment.* What does that nean? Essentially two things. First, that economic processes in the modern world ake place within the framework of a system we may call the capitalist world-conomy, and 'underdevelopment' is therefore merely a descriptive term for that art of the *processes* (processes, not states of being) found in peripheral areas of this rorld-economy. Secondly, that neither the 'development' nor the inderdevelopment' of any specific territorial unit can be analysed or interpreted rithout fitting it into the cyclical rhythms and secular trends of the world-sonomy as a whole.²

should like to explore here the particular consequences of a Phase-B At the atset, I must indicate there is an ambiguity in the expression Phase-B. There are fact two different A-B cycles. There are the Kondratiev cycles, now returning

cycle, with an A-expansion phase and a B-contraction phase, presumably lasts forty to fifty-five years. There are, however, in addition longer cycles, to which Rondo Cameron has recently given the name 'logistics'. These presumably last 150-300 years. They are called logistics because they take the shape of a statistical logistic curve, in that although the A-phase is an expansion, the B-phase is not a contraction but a stagnation. When we speak of the 'long' sixteenth century as an A-phase, and the period 1600-1750 as a B-phase, we are referring to one of these logistics. And it is of this B-phase of the logistic that I shall be speaking: the so-called 'crisis of the seventeenth century'.

These logistics are important theoretically, not only because they describe a social reality, but because they are themselves evidence for the existence of a capitalist world-economy. Let me explain myself. The late Middle Ages is generally considered to have shown an A and a B phase. Although scholars debate the exact dates, the years 1100-1250/1300 as the A-phase and 1300-1450 as the B-phase are fairly standard in the literature. Thus, we have two successive long cycles, each about 300 years: 1100-1450, 1450-1750. There are striking differences between the two cycles. In the period 1100-1450, the A-phase saw expansion of population, trade and land under cultivation, the strengthening of political apparatuses, and the expansion of feudal obligations of rural labourers to their lords. The Bphase saw the exact opposite of each of these trends: the decline of population, trade and land under cultivation (Whistangen), the weakening of central political apparatuses, and the decline of feudal obligations. The expansions and contractions took place more or less uniformly throughout Europe. In the period 1450-1750, the A-phase saw expansion of population, trade and land under cultivation as earlier. However, in terms of the political apparatuses, they were strengthened in some areas (primarily western Europe) and weakened in others (primarily castern Europe). In terms of 'feudal' obligations, they were strengthened in some areas (the 'second serfdom' of eastern Europe) but weakened still further in other areas (primarily north-western Europe).

¹ Fernand Braudel et al, 'Le déchin de Venise au XVIIe stècle', in Aspath e cause della decadenza essenzia Veneziana nel sicolo XVII, Atti del Convegno 27 giugno-2 luglio 1957, Venezia-Roma, Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1961, p. 81

^{*}This article was written as a paper for 'The World-System of Capitalism' Past and Present' Conference, sponsored by the Inter-disciplinary Graduate Program in Sociology, University of California at Santa Cruz, and by the Political Economy of the World-System' Section of the American Sociological Association, 29–31 March 1978, Santa Crux It will appear in Waiter Goldfrank (ed.), The World-System of Capitalism Past and Present, New York (forthcoming, 1979) The empirical data to justify the statements made in this article will be found in The Modern World-System, Vol. 11. Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600–1710, New York (forthcoming)

² I have argued this position in many essays, which will appear collectively as *The Capitalist World-Economy*, New York and London 1979.

See N. Kondrattev, 'The Long Waves in Economic Life', Rankar of Economic Statistics, avil, 6, November 1935, 105-15

⁴ See Rondo Cameron, 'The Logistics of European Economic Growth: Λ Note on Historical Periodization', Journal of European Economic History, II, I, Spring 1973, pp. 145-8. In the French literature, what Cameron calls logistics are often called 'trends séculaires'. But thus is confusing, since they are precisely not secular trends, that is unidirectional tendencies. Since such unidirectional tendencies seem to exist also, I shall reserve the term secular trends for them

1100—1450 logistic than is the A-phase. Instead of a decline in population, trade and land under cultivation, there was stagnation, as calculated Europe-wide; and this overall stagnation was a vector of several curves—some zones expanding, and others staying level and still others declining. In terms of both the political apparatuses and the obligations of the rural labourers to their lords, instead, of the tendencies of the A-phase being reversed in the B-phase (as had occurred in 1100—1450), the tendencies of the A-phase of 1450—1750 were reinforced in the B-phase. The obligations of 'serfdom' became even greater in eastern Europe, the states even weaker, etc.

The implications of these variances are clear. The period 1100-1450 was a period in which the feudal mode of production dominated Europe. One of the characteristics of this mode of production is the relatively high segmentation of adjacent areas. The factors that explain expansion and contraction, whatever they are, applied relatively uniformly over the whole area. The period 1450–1750 was a period in which a capitalist world-economy had come into existence in Europe. One of the characteristics of this mode of production is the relatively high degree to which the economic processes in different areas are interrelated, such that the workings of the system lead to ever-increased spatial hierarchization. Instead of uniformity, we find differentiation. Instead of a B-phase being the mirror image of an A-phase, we find an asymmetrical pattern of development. Let me now try to sketch quite briefly the asymmetrical developments in the three spatial zones we can identify—the core, the periphery and the semi-periphery—and then add a comment on the impact of the B-phase on the external arena.

A downturn in the world-economy poses the same problem for all of its zones. Demand is sluggish and profits decline. To maintain the same level of profit, one must either reduce costs somehow or increase one's share of the total market precisely at a moment when the market is not expanding. One can reduce costs by increasing efficiency or by extracting a higher rate of surplus-value from the labour-force. One can increase one's share of the market by underselling, by monopolizing, or by being the beneficiary of the failures of competitors. Any and all of these means are attempted by virtually everyone, but only a few actors can succeed in maintaining or expanding their advantage in the face of general economic adversity. It is for this reason that downturns are always a moment of increased concentration of capital. This is done at the level of the firm, but it is also done at the level of the world-economy as a whole. The 'crisis of the seventeenth century' was specifically associated historically with the rise of 'mercantilism' as an ideology. But mercantilism genetically is simply the response of all actors (except the very strongest) in a tight economy to maintain the level of profit by cornering markets in the short run, and by increasing overall efficiencies of production in the middle run.

The Core Countries

In the B-phase of a logistic, core countries have certain strengths they can utilize. They can utilize their disproportionate hold on technological

which in the A-phase had been located in the periphery. They thus reduce their overall zonal product specialization. They thereby force peripheral areas also to seek to reduce specialization. But if the core areas can, during the B-phase, manage to hold on to as large or almost as large a share of world production of the products in which they previously specialized, they can in effect increase concentration of capital in the core at the expense of the periphery. Specifically, in the seventeenth century, if we look at the world market for two key products, cereals and textiles, we can see this is exactly what happened. There was increased efficiency of cereals production in the United Provinces, England and northern France, which effectively displaced production from eastern and southern Europe. At the same time, textile production rose only marginally in peripheral areas. Hence, in crude summary, by 1700, north-western Europe made the profits both from textiles and from cereals, and eastern Europe from neither.

At the onset of the long economic downturn, the United Provinces was, among core powers, the most efficient agro-industrial producer by far. It was this productive efficiency which led to its commercial primacy, which in turn made possible its financial centrality. The triple superiority was successive, but overlapped in the period 1625–72, which might be designated as the period of Dutch hegemony. Dutch hegemony was marked by a strong state. Its strength internally can be measured by the relatively low rate of internal turbulence, the high degree of efficacy of state decisions (however cumbersome the machinery appeared on the surface to be), and its ability to serve as a world centre of political refuge as well as of internal social welfare. Externally, its strength was of course in its navy—but in its army as well (after the reforms of Maurice of Nassau). It was in short, in Renier's phrase, a 'social dictatorship of the middle class'.

It was initially in opposition to this hegemony that England and France enunciated mercantilist policies. The English Navigation Act of 1611 might be considered the opening salvo of a serious attack. It then took only twenty years to unseat the Dutch from their hegemonic position. 1672, the so-called Year of Disaster, marks the turning-point. It was less that the Dutch had lost so much, than that the English and French had advanced so far, and could now consider their battle with each other for the succession as more vital than the battle of either with the Dutch, now clearly in 'decline'. In both the period before and the period after 1672, English and French tactics centred around 1. increasing the efficiencies of their own production, and 2. creating protected markets. The increase of efficiencies in agriculture took the form both of agronomic improvements (in England, but in northern France as well), and of increased concentration of ownership—in particular, the sharp decline of the small and medium-sized owner-occupier (known in England as the yeoman farmer and in northern France as the laboureur with a charrie. As for industrial production, the moment of great increase in efficiencies is generally considered to be after 1750. But in so far as there were im-

[§] G J Renier, The Datch Nation. An Historical Study, London 1944.

England and France.

The new colonization of the 'extended' Caribbean must be seen as part of this same movement of concentration of capital in the core. (The extended Caribbean is defined as the tropical and semi-tropical zone that lies between the Chesapeake Valley of North America and Brazil.) This zone was in part already colonized by Spain and Portugal. Economic downturn in the world-economy led the core powers of north-western Europe in the early seventeenth century to explore the economic advantages of creating new areas of primary production under their direct control. In the case of wheat, they could obtain the transfer of the locus of production merely by agronomic improvements. But sugar, for climatic reasons, could never be grown in north-western Europe. An alternative, which had similar consequences for capital accumulation, was the creation of 'sugar colonies' in the Caribbean. Where areas were uncolonized, the three core powers engaged in a competitive scramble for territory. Where Spain and Portugal already occupied territory, it proved economically feasible and politically easier to obtain the same benefits through the creation of a trade system, partly legitimate and partially contraband, which turned Spain and Portugal into economic conveyorbelts between Iberian America and north-western Europe.

But there was a second colonization at this time in the Americas—in the temperate zones, most importantly in the New England and Middle Atlantic areas of North America. Here the motive was not primarily the concentration of staple production under direct core-country control, but the creation of protected markets for core-country manufacturers. And here, unlike in the extended Caribbean, we find a difference among the core powers: only England colonized. To see why this should have been so, let us return to the comparison of England and northern France as the competing core economic zones (rather than England and France). In this case, England's outlet for surplus wheat and surplus manufactures was located in foreign trade. But France's outlet for the same surpluses could be, at least in part, southern France. One could describe the Colbertian attempts to create a more politically and economically integrated France as, in part, an alternative to English colonization of temperate zones of North America. This could be consonant with both the absence of French parallel attempts to colonize temperate zones and the absence of English parallel buildings of bureaucratic superstructure at this time. 'L'état, c'est mor' was not the slogan of a strong state, but the battle-cry of a weak one seeking to become as strong as the English.

The Periphery

If increased concentration of capital in the core is a consequence of a B-phase, it follows that the periphery must suffer economically even more in B-phases than in A-phases. This attendant economic behaviour may take on the appearance of involution and lowered participation in world trade; but the reality is in fact further 'underdevelopment'. Let us shift our perspective to that of major owner-producers in the periphery who, in the A-phase, had specialized in export staples for the world market. How can they manoeuvre in the face of the onset of a weakened world

tion in relation to world demand, and evidenced by a decline in world prices (both nominal and real)? They can react like everyone else: by seeking to lower costs and to gain an increased share of the world market. The large owner-producers can lower costs primarily by both using their combined political and economic power over the rural labourers to obtain an increase in the amount of corvée-labour (which happened : everywhere in eastern Europe at this time) and ending (licitly or illicitly) quit-rent tenancies and forcing former tenants into the role either of serfs or of wage-labour (which happened in eastern, northern and southern Europe at this time). The large owner-producers can expand their share of the market merely by increasing corvée-labour (thus leaving the serfs less ? time for independent production for the market). In addition they can purchase the lands put up for sale by tenants who have suffered economic reverse. Such (often forced) purchase occurred throughout Europe. But in peripheral areas such land was often left uncultivated (reduction of overall land-use), whereas in core areas such land was precisely made fruitful by new improved techniques.

There were two clear consequences of such tactics. The initial increased production by large owner-producers led to the exhaustion of both land and labour, and was reflected in subsequent famines, epidemics, etc., resulting in the long run in decreased overall production. The land was increasingly concentrated in the hands of large owner-producers. Both in the periphery and in the core, and indeed in the semi-periphery as well, the litimotif of phase-B was the massive decline of the yeoman farmer. That he survived in wine-growing regions stands out all the more clearly as an exception; but even there, did he not decline relatively?

In the periphery, two things went along with these shifts in agricultural structure. Whereas the agronomic improvements in the core were eliminating for this period the market for staples from peripheral areas, the decline of the small owner-producer and/or tenant-producer meant that there was an increased market in the peripheral areas for the products of the large owner-producers, who thus continued to produce for the market. The market now, however, was no longer the 'world' market but became 'regional'. Since the regional markets provided less total income for the large owner-producers than had the world market in phase-A, the large owner-producers sought to supplement their income by recreating local industrial production for the regional market. Such production had drastically declined in phase-A, as textiles and metal wares were imported from core countries. Now in any case there was not the bullion with which to import these goods. Local non-luxury textile and metalware production revived, either directly on the domains of large ownerproducers or as putting-out industries (Verlagssystem). To this process of what today we would call 'import substitution' was added a creative innovation: the alcohol industry. The production of vodka and the extension of wine-growing for a mass market was propelled by large owner-producers in peripheral areas, who legally monopolized this production and actively encouraged the new taste-patterns of the lower strata. This new industry was economically of very great importance in furthering the concentration of capital in the hands of the large peripheral owner-producers. The increased concentration of capital in the hands of

political rights and legal jurisdiction. The strength of the state either steadily declined (as in Poland) or become entirely subordinate to foreign states (Hungary, Livonia, Naples, etc.), whose proconsuls came to terms with the local aristocracy by extending the latter's juridical domains and tax-exemptions.

The Semi-periphery

What of the semi-peripheral areas? Did they share the relative advantages of the core areas or the relative decline of the peripheral zones? Here we must distinguish between those areas that were semi-peripheral as part of a 'decline' and areas that were or became 'semi-peripheral' as part of a rise. The allocation of roles in a capitalist world is not static. Indeed, it is particularly in phase-B that positional movement occurs. In general, the semi-peripheral areas in decline looked more like the peripheral zones, whereas the rising semi-peripheral areas shared some of the advantages and characteristics of the core areas. In particular, mercantilist tactics were more likely to be associated with the latter than the former. Examples of declining areas were Spain, Portugal and the states located in the old dorsal spine of Europe (northern Italy, the southern and western Germanies including Saxony, the Spanish Netherlands). Examples of rising areas were notably Sweden, Brandenburg-Prussia, the temperatezone colonies of British North America and to some extent Austria. (Denmark, Norway and Finland should be thought of as part of the peripheral zone.)

We immediately notice that the 'declining' semi-peripheral zones all suffered population declines in this era, as did peripheral zones, whereas the 'rising' semi-peripheral zones were all zones of relative population expansion. The power of the state in these declining semi-peripheral zones can be said clearly to decline vis-à-vis other states (so much so that there was even an attempt to partition Spain at one point, albeit an abortive one). The power of these states relative to internal regional and aristocratic forces was ambiguous: the least that can be said is that it was a domain of constant struggle. The anstocracy did continue to dominate the state administration. From the point of view of the core powers, these states were prey in whose internal affairs they felt free to intervene. Their armies all grew weaker. If their power did not decline still further, it was precisely because of the protection afforded by the acute competition among the core powers. Still, grosso modo, it can be said that in the course of the seventeenth century Portugal became economically a satellite of, and transmission belt for, first Dutch, then English interests, while Spain played this role for France. In consequence, the states of north-western Europe significantly expanded their trade not only with the Iberian peninsula itself but with Iberian America as well. This is the era of the relative 'de-industrialization' of northern Italy and central Spain, and even of the Spanish Netherlands and the Rhineland. In so far as world industrial production was cut back, these were the areas where the cuts were made. Within these areas, there was a transfer of capital to investment in agriculture; and there as elsewhere the seignorial domain grew at the expense of the peasant economy. The state administrations were not generally successful at implementing mercantilist policies. From

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The picture was rather different in Sweden and Brandenburg-Prussia. Both are instances of state machineries which deliberately sought to take advantage of a B-phase, and the subsequent sharp rivalries among core powers, to carve out a new place for themselves. Sweden at first seemed to do very well indeed, until its aspirations were crushed in the Great Northern War. Brandenburg-Prussia started from an infinitely weaker base point, but was able by the early eighteenth century to pass Sweden by, and to emerge at the end of phase-B as the one great semi-peripheral beneficiary of the era. Without treating here the historical specificaties of what made it possible for these two states to attempt this 'bootstrap' operation, when others could not and did not, and for Prussia to succeed where Sweden eventually failed, a few general points can nevertheless be made. In the nature of things, the 'Prussian' path was not a path everyone could take. Many could try, but a world-economy in stagnation with increasing concentration of capital was not compatible with the emergence of many new centres of capital accumulation. Secondly, the key weapon that both Sweden and Prussia used was the creation of a strong military force, which alone made possible the mercantilist measures central to the strategy. Of course, the strong military required a strong tax base, which necessitated an efficient administration—one relatively open to talents. Thirdly, it should be observed that both Sweden and Prussia actively sought to manipulate core-power rivalries, both to aid their advance and even more importantly to block negative moves against their advance. They did this by alternating alliance and economic sweeteners (for example, opening their 'protected' economies at crucial junctures to core-country investment, and their administrative apparatuses to core-country personnel). In twentieth-century language, they played the neo-colonial role very well. They were aided in this game by the fact they were not the rich prizes per se that Spain, Portugal and northern Italy were.

The case of the New England and Middle Atlantic states is a very particular one, and it is only by stretching our language that we can call these areas semi-peripheral in the seventeenth century. But the groundwork for later developments was laid then, in the growth of a major shipbuilding industry and of other minor industries. Their advantage is that they were settlers in a non-tropical area of the power that was to win the competition, and that the mercantilist strategy of England inadvertently benefited them. When the English realized this towards the end of the seventeenth century, they tried to reverse matters but it was historically too late.

I shall conclude with a brief word on the external arena. Already in the long sixteenth century, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, India and West Africa were all linked by trade to the European world-economy, but externally and not essentially What happened in phase-B? The attempts of the core powers to hold their own in these times of economic adversity led them to try to find new sources of profit by importing new staples from these countries. But the weakness of these same core states, primarily concerned with their struggle with each other, made it impossible for the core states to undermine sufficiently the state apparatuses in

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after 1750. Phase-B represented, therefore, a period of 'economic' corrosion for these external arenas that no doubt prepared the ground for what came later. But it was not sufficient in my view to argue that these states had already by that time been incorporated into the world-economy.

A phase-B is, as we can see, a time of great positional movement. It represents stagnation overall, to be sure, but stagnation as the sum of increased concentration of capital and, therefore, of increased polarization and differentiation. It does not slow down the workings of capitalism; it is rather an integral part of them.

Olmmannel Wallerstein

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Two Notes on the End of the World

Hans Magnus Enzensberges

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The apocalypse is part of our ideological baggage. It is aphrodisiac, nightmare, a commodity like any other. You can call it a metaphor for the collapse of capitalism, which as we all know has been imminent for more than a century. We come up against it in the most varied shapes and guises: as warning finger and scientific forecast, collective fiction and sectarian rallying cry, as product of the leisure industry, as superstition, as vulgar mythology, as a riddle, a kick, a joke, a projection. It is ever present, but never 'actual': a second reality, an image that we construct for ourselves, an incessant production of our fantasy, the catastrophe in the mind.

All this it is and more, as one of the oldest ideas of the human species. Thick volumes could have been written on its origins, and of course such volumes have actually been written. We know likewise all manner of things about its chequered history, about its periodic ebb and flow, and the way these fluctuations connect with the material process of history. The idea of the apocalypse has accompanied utopian thought since its first beginnings, pursuing it like a shadow, like a reverse side that cannot be left behind: without catastrophe, no millennium, without apocalypse, no paradise. The idea of the end of the world is simply a negative utopia.

But even the end of the world is no longer what it used to be. The film playing in our heads, and still more uninhibitedly in our unconscious, is distinct in many respects from the dreams of old. In its traditional coinings, the apocalypse was a venerable, indeed a sacred idea. But the catastrophe which we are so concerned with (or rather haunted by) is an entirely secularized phenomenon. We read its signs on the walls of buildings, where they appear overnight, clumsily sprayed; we read them on the print-outs spewed forth by the computer. Our seven-headed monster answers to many names: police state, paranoia, bureaucracy, terror, economic crisis, arms race, destruction of the environment. Its four riders look like the heroes of Westerns and sell cigarettes, while the trumpets that proclaim the end of the world serve as theme music for a commercial break. Once people saw in the apocalypse the unknowable avenging hand of God. Today it appears as the methodically calculated

its approach we call reds, oil sheikhs, terrorists, multinationals; the gnomes of Zürich and the Frankensteins of the biology labs; upos and neutron bombs; demons from the Kremlin or the Pentagon: an underworld of unimaginable conspiracies and machinations, whose strings are pulled by the all-powerful cretins of the secret police.

The apocalypse was also once a singular event, to be expected unannounced as a bolt from the blue: an unthinkable moment that only seers and prophets could anticipate—and, of course, no one wanted to listen to their warnings and predictions. Our end of the world, on the other hand, is sung from the rooftops even by the sparrows; the element of surprise is missing; it seems only to be a question of time. The doom we picture for ourselves is insidious and torturingly slow in its approach, the apocalypse in slow motion. It is reminiscent of that hoary avant-garde classic of the silent cinema, in which we see a gigantic factory chimney crack up and collapse noiselessly on the screen, for a full twenty minutes, while the spectators, in a kind of indolent comfort, lean back in their threadbare velvet seats and nibble their popcorn and peanuts. After the performance, the futurologist mounts the stage. He looks like a poor imitation of Dr Strangelove, the mad scientist, only he is repulsively fat. Quite calmly he informs us that the atmospheric ozone belt will have disappeared in twenty years' time, so that we shall surely be toasted by cosmic radiation if we are lucky enough to survive until then, unknown substances in our milk are driving us to psychosis; and with the rate at which world population is growing, there will soon be standing room only on our planet. All this with Havana cigar in hand, in a wellcomposed speech of impeccable logic. The audience suppresses a yawn, even though, according to the professor, the disaster looms imminently ahead. But it's not going to come this afternoon. This afternoon, everything will go on just as before, perhaps a little bit worse than last week, but not so that anyone would notice. If one or other of us should be a little depressed this afternoon, which cannot of course be ruled out, then the thought might strike him, irrespective of whether he works in the Pentagon or the underground, irons shirts or welds sheet metal, that it would really be simpler if we were rid of the problem once and for all; if the catastrophe really did come. However, this is out of the question. Finality, which was formerly one of the major attributes of the apocalypse, and one of the reasons for its power of attraction, is no longer vouchsafed us.

We have also lost another traditional aspect of the end of the world Previously, it was generally agreed that the event would affect everyone simultaneously and without exception: the never satisfied demand for equality and justice found in this conception its last refuge. But as we see it today, doom is no longer a leveller, quite the opposite. It differs from country to country, from class to class, from place to place. While it is already overtaking some, others can watch it on television. Bunkers are built, ghettos walled in, fortresses erected, bodyguards hired, on a large scale as well as a small. Corresponding to the country house with burglar alarms and electric fences, we have whole countries, on the international scale, who fence themselves in while others go to ruin. The nightmare of the end of the world does not end this temporal disparity, it

a shrug of the shoulders by those not directly affected—including the African and Indian governments. At this point, finally, the joke comes to an end.

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Berlin, Spring 1978

Dear Balthasar,

When I wrote my comment on the apocalypse—a work which I confession was not particularly thorough or serious—I was still unaware that you were also concerned with the future. You complained to me on the telephone that you were 'not really getting anywhere'. That sounded almost like an appeal for help. I know you well enough to understand your dilemma. Today it is only the technocrats who are advancing towards the year 2000 full of optimism, with the unerring instinct of lemmings, and you are not one of their number. On the contrary, you are a faithful soul, always ready to assemble under the banner of utopia. You want as much as ever to hold fast to the principle of hope. You wish us well: i.e. not only you and me, but humanity as a whole.

Please don't be angry if this sounds ironic. That isn't my fault. You wanted to see if I would come to your help. My letter will be disappointing for you, and perhaps you even feel that I am attacking you from behind. That isn't my intention. All I would like to suggest is that we consider things with the cuffs off.

The strength of left-wing theory of whatever stamp, from Babeuf through to Bloch, i.e. for more than a century and a half, lay in the fact that it based itself on a positive utopia which had no peer in the existing world. Socialists, communists and anarchists all shared the conviction, that their struggle would introduce the realm of freedom in a foreseeable period of time. They 'knew just where they wanted to go and just what, with the help of history, strategy and effort, they ought or needed to do to get there. Now, they no longer do.' I read these lapidary words recently in an article by the English historian Eric Hobsbawm. But this old communist does not forget to add that 'In this respect, they do not stand alone. Capitalists are just as much at a loss as socialists to understand their future, and just as puzzled by the failure of their theorists and prophets.'

Hobsbawm is quite correct. The ideological deficit exists on both sides. Yet the loss of certainty about the future does not balance out. It is harder to bear for the Left than for those who never had any other intention but to hang on at any price to some snippet of their own power and privileges. This is why the Left, including you dear Balthasar, go in for grumbling and complaining.

No one is ready any more, you say, or in a position either, to put forward a positive idea that goes beyond the horizon of the existing state of affairs. Instead of this, false consciousness is rampant, the stage is dominated by apostasy and confusion. I remember our last conversation about the 'new

sides, and your tirades against the flippant doomsters, shameless-pessimists and apostles of defeatism. I shall be careful not to contradict you here. But I wonder whether one thing has not escaped you in all this; the fact that in these expressions and moods there is precisely what you were looking for—an idea that goes beyond the limits of our present existence. For in the last analysis, the world has certainly not come to an end (or else we could not talk about it); and so far no conclusive proof has reached me that an event of this kind is going to take place at any clearly ascertainable point in time. The conclusion I draw from this is that we are dealing here with a utopia, even if a negative one; and I further maintain that, for the historical reasons I mentioned, left-wing theory is not particularly well equipped to deal with this kind of utopia.

Your reactions are only further evidence for my assumption. The first stanza of your song, in which you bewail the prevailing intellectual situation, is promptly followed by the second, in which you enumerate the scapegoats. For such an old hand at theory as yourself, it is not difficult to lay hands on the guilty parties: the ideological opponent, the agents of anti-communism, the manipulation of the mass media. Your arguments are in no way new to me. They remind me of an essay that came to my attention a few years back. The author, an American Marxist by the name of H. C. Greisman, came to the conclusion that 'The images of decline of which the media are so fond are designed to hypnotize and stupefy the masses in such a way that they come to see any hope of revolution as meaningless.'

What is striking in this proposition is above all its essential defensiveness. For a hundred years or so, as long as it was sure of its ground, classical Marxist theory argued the very opposite. It did not see the images of catastrophe and visions of doom of the time simply as lies concocted by some secret seducers and spread among the people, but sought rather to explain them in social terms, as symbolic depictions of a thoroughly real process. In the nineteen-twenties, to take just one example, the Left saw the attraction that Spengler's historical metaphysics had for the bourgeois intelligentsia in precisely this way: The Decline of the West was in reality nothing more than the imminent collapse of capitalism.

Today, on the other hand, someone like yourself no longer feels his views confirmed by the apocalyptic fantasy, but instead feels threatened, reacting with last-ditch slogans and defensive gestures. To be quite frank, dear Balthasar, it seems to me that the result of these obeisances is rather wretched. I don't mean by this that it is simply false. You do not, of course, fail to resort to the well-tried path of ideological criticism. And it is child's play to show that the rise and fall of utopian and apocalyptic moods in history corresponds to the political, social and economic conditions of the time. It is also uncontestable that they are exploited politically, just like any other fantasy that exists on a mass scale. You need not imagine you have to teach me the ABC. I know as well as you that the fantasy of doom always suggests the desire for miraculous salvation; and it is clear to me, too, that the Bonapartist saviour is always waiting in the wings, in the form of military dictatorship and right-wing putsch. When it is a question of survival, there have always been people all too ready to

who have called for one more or less expressly, in the last few years, should include both a liberal and a Stalinist: the American sociologist Hellbroner, and the German philosopher Harich. It is also beyond doubt that the apocalyptic metaphor promises relief from analytical thought, as it tends to throw everything together in the same pot. From the Middle East conflict to a postal strike, from punk style to a nuclear reactor disaster, anything and everything is conceived as a hidden sign of an imaginary totality: catastrophe 'in general'. The tendency to hasty generalization damages that residual power of clear thought that we still have left. In this sense, the feeling of doom does not lead just to mystification. It goes without saying that the new irrationalism which say troubles you can in no way solve the real problems. On the contrary, it makes them appear insoluble.

This is all very easy to say, but it does not help matters all that much. You try and fight the fantasies of destruction with quotations from the classics. But these rhetorical victories, dear Balthasar, remind me of the heroic feats of Baron von Münchhausen. Like him, you want to reach your goal alone and unafraid; and to avoid departing from the correct straight line, you too are ready in case of need to leap onto a cannon-ball.

But the future is not a sportsground for hussars, nor is ideological criticism a cannon-ball. You should leave it to the futurologists to imitate the boastings of an old tin soldier. The future that you have in mind is in no way an object of science. It is something that exists only in the medium of social fantasy, and the organ by which it is chiefly experienced is the unconscious. Hence the power of these images that we all produce, day and night? not only with the head, but with the whole body. Our collective dreams of fear and desire weigh at least as heavy, probably heavier, than our theories and analyses.

The really threadbare character of customary ideological criticism is that it ignores all this and wants to know nothing of it. Has it not struck you that it has long ceased to explain things that do not fit its schemas, and started to taboo them instead? Without our having properly noticed, it has taken on the role of an agency of adaptation. Alongside the state censorship of the law-and-order people there are now ranged the mental-hospital orderlies of the Left in the social and human sciences, who would like to pacify us with their tranquilizers. Their maxims are: I Never concede anything. 2. Reduce the unfamiliar to the familiar. 3. Always think only with the head. 4. The unconscious must do what it is told.

The arrogance of these academic exorcists is surpassed only by their impotence. They fail to understand that myths cannot be refuted by seminars, and that their bans on ideas have a very short reach. What help is it to them, for example, and what use to us, if for the hundredth time they declare any comparison between natural and social processes to bed inadmissible and reactionary? The elementary power of fantasy teaches millions of people to break this ban constantly. Our ideologists only raise a smile when they attempt to obliterate such ineffaceable images as flood and fire, earthquake and hurricane. Moreover, there are people in the ranks of natural scientists who are in a position to elaborate fantasies of

banning them: mathematicians drafting a topographical theory of catastrophe, or biochemists who have ideas about certain analogies between biological and social evolution. We are still waiting in vain for the sociologist who will understand that, in a sense that is still to be decoded, there is no longer any such thing as a purely natural catastrophic.

Instead of this, our theorists, chained to the philosophical traditions of German idealism, refuse to admit even today what every bystander has long since grasped: that there is no world spirit; that we do not know the laws of history; that even the class struggle is an 'indigenous' process, which no vanguard can consciously plan and lead; that social evolution, like natural evolution, has no subject and is therefore unpredictable; that consequently, when we act politically, we never manage to achieve what we had in mind, but rather something quite different, which at one time we could not even have imagined; and that the crisis of all positive utopias has its basis precisely in this fact. The projects of the nineteenth century have been falsified completely and without exception by the history of the twentieth century. In the essay I already mentioned, Eric Hobsbawm recalls a congress held by the Spanish anarchists in 1898. They sketched a glorious picture of life after the victory of the revolution: a world of tall shining buildings with elevators that would save climbing stairs, electric light for all, garbage disposers and marvellous household gadgets . . . This vision of humanity, presented with Messianic pathos, now looks strikingly familiar: in many parts of our cities it has already become reality. There are victories that are hard to distinguish from defeats. No one feels comfortable in recalling the promise of the October revolution sixty years ago: once the capitalists were driven out of Russia, a bright future without exploitation and oppression would dawn for the workers and peasants. . .

Are you still with me, Balthasar? Are you still listening? I have come to the end of my letter. Forgive me if it has got rather long, and if my sentences have taken on a mocking undertone. It's not me who injected this, it's a kind of objective, historic mockery, and the laugh, for better or worse, is always on the losing side. We all have to bear it together.

Optimism and pessimism, my dear friend, are so much sticking-plaster for fortune-tellers and the writers of leading articles. The pictures of the future that humanity draws for itself, both positive and negative utopias, have never been unambiguous. The idea of the millennium, the sunshine state, was not the pallid dream of a land of milk and honey; it always had its elements of fear, panic, terror and destruction. And the apocalyptic fantasy, conversely, produces more than just pictures of decadence and despair; it also contains, inescapably bound up with the terror, the demand for vengeance, for justice, impulses of relief and hope.

The pharisees, those who always know best, want to convince us that the world would be all right again if the 'progressive forces' took a strong line with people's fantasies; if they themselves were only sitting on the Central Committee, and pictures of doom could be prohibited by decree of the Party. They refuse to understand that it is we ourselves who produce these pictures, and that we hold on to them because they

between Frankfurt and Bonn, in front of the TV screen that shows we are at war, beneath helicopters, in the corridors of clinics, employment offices and prisons—because, in a single word, they are in this sense realistic.

I scarcely need reassure you, dear Balthasar, that I know as little of the future as you do yourself. I am writing to you because I do not count you among the pigeon-holers and ticket-punchers of the world spirit. What I wish you, as I wish myself and us all, is a little more clarity about our own confusion, a little less fear of our own fear, and a little more attention, respect and modesty in the face of the unknown. Then we shall be able to see a little further.

Yours, H. M. E.

Translated by David Fernbach

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Introduction to Lukács

The aesthetic debates within German Marxism are now acknowledged to constitute one of the most remarkable sequences in European cultural history this century. Few episodes either in the general history of Marxist theory or in the course of aesthetic discussion as a whole can match the depth and range of the many-sided controversies that engaged Benjamin and Brecht, Adorno, Lukács and Bloch, across some three decades, from the thirties to the sixties. The major texts of the debate—Bloch's public clash with Lukács, the Adorno-Benjamin correspondence, Brecht's critique of Lukács and the record of his discussions with Benjamin in Denmark, Adorno's post-war reflections on Lukács's criticism and on the Brechtian theatre—have recently been assembled into a single volume, Aesthetics and Politics (NLB 1977). These are supplemented here with a series of four excerpts from Lukács's culminating contribution to the theory of art, the Ästhetik.¹

The first and longest passage is concerned with the concept of allegory as developed by Benjamin in The Origin of German Tragic Drama (NLB 1977); the second, with Brecht's reflections on the relation between art and science; the latter two, with the 'alienation effect' and its place in the theory and practice of Brecht's theatre. Their common purpose is to reaffirm the realist canons defended by Lukács throughout his career as a Marxist aesthetician. Thus Benjamin, presented here as the most formidable and lucid theoretician of modernist art, is associated with an artistic strategy which, reifying the objective world and seeking ultimately to abolish it in an impulse of religious nihilism, thwarted the humanistic bases and purposes of 'mimetic representation'. The central themes of Brecht's dramaturgy are likewise criticized—in this case, in an operation designed to claim his motives and 'mature' productions for

¹ Georg Lukács, Asthita, Neuwied and Berlin 1963 (2 vols) See, respectively, Vol. II, pp. 739–66, Vol. I, pp. 679–80; Vol. II, pp. 183–8, and Vol. II, pp. 773–4

being depreciated as 'immature', 'misleading' or simply superfluous.

Neither was alive to respond, but Lukács did not have the last word. For around the same time as the publication of the Astbettk, there also appeared Adorno's withering assessment of The Meaning of Contemporary Realism, soon followed by his antithetical critique of Brecht. Thus the mid-century aesthetic debate in German Marxism came to a close with its central issues unresolved. They are still before us today.

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See Authories and Politics, pp. 151-76 and 177-95 respectively.

On Walter Benjamin

Our purpose here is to demonstrate that the spirit of allegory manifests itself quite unambiguously both in the theory and in the practice of the modernist avantgarde.

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It is no accident that, for decades now, critics have drawn attention to the basic affinity between Baroque and Romanticism on the one hand and the foundations of modernist art and ideology on the other. The purpose of this tactic is to define—and legitimate—the latter as the heirs and successors of those great crises of the modern world, and as the representatives of the profound crisis of our present age. It was Walter Benjamin who furnished the most profound and friginal theorization of these views. In his study of Baroque tragic drama Traverspiel), he constructs a bold theory to show that allegory is the style most genuinely suited to the sentiments, ideas and experience of the modern world. Not that this programme is explicitly proclaimed. On the contrary, his text onfines itself quite strictly to his chosen historical theme. Its spirit, however,

(and Romanticism) from the perspective of the ideological and artistic needs of the present. His choice of this narrower theme for his purpose is peculiarly happy, because the elements of crisis in Baroque emerge with unambiguous clarity in the specific context of German society of the period. This came about as a consequence of Germany's temporary lapse into being a mere object of world-history. This led in its turn to a despairing, inward-looking provincialism, as a result of which the realist counter-tendencies of the age were enfeebled—or became manifest only in exceptional cases like Grimmelshausen. It was a brilliant insight that led Benjamin to fix on this period in Germany, and on the drama in particular, as the subject of his research. It enables him to give a vivide portrayal of the actual theoretical problem, without forcing or distorting the historical facts in the manner so often seen in contemporary general historical.

As a preliminary to a closer scrutiny of Benjamin's analysis of the Baroque from the vantage-point of the problematic character of contemporary art, it will be helpful to take a quick look at the distinction between symbolism and allegory established by Romantic aesthetics. This will reveal that their position was here much less clearly defined than that of thinkers in the crises that preceded or followed them. The reasons for their intermediate position are manifold. Above all, there was the overwhelming impact of Goethe's personality, with his clear insight into this very problem—which he too, as we have seen, regarded as crucial for the fate of art. This factor was intensified by the powerful drive towards—realism in art active in Goethe, but by no means in him alone. Furthermore, Romanticism thought of itself as a transitional phase between two crises. This led to specific, if questionable insights into the historical nature of the problem, but also to a certain defusing of the inner dilemma implicit in any attempt to define allegory.

Schelling, in his aesthetics, organizes the history of art according to the principle that classical art was an age of symbolism, while Christianity was dominated by allegory. The first claim is based on the tradition established by Winckelmann, Lessing and Goethe; the second is intended to provide a historical underpinning for a specifically Romantic art. It is not so much the absence of any really precise knowledge of the Christian era that makes this scheme so vague and ambiguous, as the fact that its perspective is all too monolithically Romantic. It does away with that conflict already familiar to us between symbol and allegory in sculpture, and even interprets as allegorical authors and works in whom the primacy of realistic symbolism is indubitable. Solger takes over Schelling's distinction, but defines it more sharply at the level of general theory.

The real theoreticians of the crisis tendencies of allegory in Romanticism were Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis. Their sifting and propagation of the idea of crisis, and of allegory as a means of expression appropriate to it, has close affinities with the philosophies of history just outlined. But whereas, particularly for Schelling, the problem is rendered less acute by

¹ Warks, Stuttgart and Augsburg 1956, Vol. 1, 5, P 452

^{*} Solger, Erwin, Berlin 1845, pp 41-9.

takes as his starting-point the loss of a mythology that might serve as a foundation for culture, and above all for art. The loss is seen as the index of a crisis, even though he still hopes and believes that the creation of a new mythology will make it possible to find a way out of the impasse of the profound crisis of his own day. Since for Schlegel every mythology is nothing other than 'a hieroglyphic expression of Nature around us', transfigured by imagination and love, it comes as no surprise to see him conclude that 'all beauty is allegory. Simply because it is ineffable, the highest truth can only be expressed in allegory.' This leads to the universal hegemony of allegory in all forms of human activity; language itself, in its primordial manifestations, is 'identical with allegory'.

It is plain to see that such an analysis increasingly tends to cut allegory free from its old links with the Christian religion—links which were precisely determined and even laid down by theology. Instead, it establishes its affinity with a specifically modern anarchy of the feelings, and with a dissolution of form which leads in its turn to the collapse of objective representation [Gegenstandlichkeit]. It is Novalis who finds an explicit formula for such trends. 'Stories without [logical] links, only associations, like dreams. Poems that are merely melodious and full of beautiful words, but without any meaning or coherence—at best only a few stanzas which are comprehensible—like a mass of fragments composed of the most heterogeneous objects. At best true poetry can only have a general allegorical sense and an indirect effect, like music, etc. '4

Compared to these uncertain, obscure and self-contradictory statements by the Romantics, the picture of German Baroque tragedy etched by Benjamin is remarkable for its impressive internal consistency and coherence. This is not the place to enter into a discussion of his often brilliant polemics, such as the one against Goethe, or of his illuminating detailed analyses. We must start by emphasizing that his whole interpretation of Baroque does not stop short with a contrast between Baroque and Classicism, or with the attempt (typical of some later eclectics) to establish Mannerism and Classicism as related, complementary tendencies. Instead, he makes a direct attack on his target: the unveiling of the principle of art itself. In the field of allegorical intuition', he says 'the image is a fragment, a rune. Its beauty as a symbol evaporates when the light of divine learning falls upon it. The false appearance of totality is extinguished. For the sides disappears, the simile ceases to exist, and the cosmos it contains shrivels up . . . A deep-rooted intuition of the problematic character of art . . . emerges as a reaction to its self-confidence at the time of the Renaissance.'5 However, the logic of Benjamin's argument leads to the conclusion that the problematic character of art is that of the world itself, the world of mankind, of history and society; it is the decay of all these that has been made visible in the imagery of allegory. In allegory, 'the observer is confronted with the faces bippocratica of history as a petrified, primordial landscape'. History

Friedrich Schlegel, Prassische Jagondschriften, Vienna 1908, Vol. II, pp. 361, 364 and 382 Novalia, Worke, Jena 1923, Vol. II, p. 308

Walter Benjamin, The Origin of German Trage: Drama, NLB, London 1977, p. 176

that of irresistible decay'. However, 'allegory thereby declares itself to be beyond beauty. Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things '6

Thus Benjamin sees with absolute clarity that, though the opposition of symbol and allegory is crucial to the aesthetic definition of any work of art, it is not ultimately the spontaneous or conscious product of aesthetic considerations. It is fed by deeper sources: by man's necessary response to the reality in which he lives and which assists or impedes his activities. No detailed examination is required to show that, with all this, what Benjamin is doing is to take up and extend in a more profound way the problem of modern art, as defined two decades before him by Wilhelm Worringer in his book Abstraction and Empathy. Benjamin's analysis is deeper and more discriminating than that of his predecessor, and more specific and sensitive in its historical classification of aesthetic forms. The resulting dualism which, as we have seen, was given its first, highly abstract definition by the Romantics, now crystallizes out into a firmly based historical description and interpretation of the modern crisis in art and ideology. Unlike Worringer and subsequent critics of modernist art. Benjamin feels no need to project its spiritual and intellectual foundations back into any primordial age, in order to foreground the gulf separating symbol and allegory. Nor is his achievement significantly impaired by the fact that socio-historical undercurrents remain somewhat vague and unfocused.

Benjamin's study, therefore, starts from the idea that allegory and symbol express fundamentally divergent human responses to reality. His incisive criticism of the obscurities in the formulations of the Romantics turned a spotlight on the fact that, in the last analysis, the allegorical mode is based on a disturbance that disrupts the anthropomorphizing response to the world which constitutes the foundation of aesthetic reflection. But since what we see in mimetic art is man's striving for self-awareness in his relations with his proper sphere of activity in nature and society, it is evident that a concern with allegory must undermine that universal humanity which is always present implicitly in aesthetic reflection. Without generalizing as broadly as we do here, Benjamin expresses himself very firmly on this point. 'And even today it is by no means selfevident that the primacy of the thing over the personal, the fragment over the total, represents a confrontation between the allegory and the symbol, to which it is the polar opposite and, for that very reason, its equal in power. Allegorical personification has always concealed the fact that its: function is not the personification of things, but rather to give the thing a more imposing form by getting it up as a person.'7

This brings the key elements of the problem sharply into focus. However, Benjamin is concerned only to establish aesthetic (or trans-aesthetic), parity for allegory. For this reason he does not go beyond mere description, albeit a conceptually generalized one. He ignores the fact that to give things a more imposing form is to fetishize them, in contrast to an

⁴ Ibid. pp 166 and 178

^{&#}x27;Ibid pp. 186-7

defetishization and its true knowledge of things as the mediators of human relations. Benjamin does not even touch on this issue. Subsequent theorists far less critical than Benjamin do make frequent use of the word 'fetish' in the later manifestoes of avant-gardist art. But, of course, they use it to mean something 'primordial'—as the expression of an authentically primitive, 'magic' attitude towards things. It goes without saying that neither in their theory nor in their practice do they notice that an attempt to retrieve an archaic magic culture could take place only in the imagination, while in reality they uncritically accepted the capitalist fetishization of human relations into things. Nor is the situation altered in the slightest by the frequent substitution of 'emblem' (in its more recently acquired meaning) for 'fetish'. For in allegorical contexts an emblem expresses nothing if not an uncritically affirmed fetishization.

In the Baroque, Benjamin rightly discerns the indivisible union of religion and convention. The interaction of these two elements creates an atmosphere in which allegory undermines any real objective representation from two different angles. We have already considered the tendency towards fetishization. However, Benjamin has also perceived that this factor sets another, contrary one in motion. 'Any person, any object, any relationship can mean absolutely anything else. With this possibility a destructive but just verdict is passed on the profane world: it is characterized as a world in which the detail is of no great importance.78 This is the religious world of devalued particularity, a world in which the particular is preserved in its devalued state. An unfetishized thing is necessarily constructed from its qualities, its details; unfetishized thinghood is the way a determinate particular just happens to be. To go beyond this, the internal relationships between appearance and essence, detail and the objective ensemble must be intensified. An object can only be rationally organized, it can only be raised to the plane of the individual (Basonders), the typical, as a totality of rationally arranged details, if the details can acquire a symptomatic character which points beyond themselves to some essence.

When Benjamin rightly points out that allegory wholly abolishes detail, and with it all concrete objective representation, he seems to be diagnosing a much more radical annihilation of all particularity. But appearances are deceptive; such annihilation actually implies recurrence. Such acts of substitution only mean that interchangeable things and details are abolished in the concrete form in which they happen to exist. Hence the act of abolition affects only their given nature and replaces them with objects whose internal structure is wholly identical with theirs. Therefore, since what happens is that one particular is simply replaced by another, this abolition of particularity is nothing more than its constant reproduction. This process remains the same in every allegorical view of representation, and by no means implies a conflict with its general religious foundations.

In the Baroque itself, however, and particularly in Benjamin's interpretation of it, a new motif becomes apparent. This is the fact that the

[♣] Ibid p. 175

outlined no longer possesses any concrete religious content. It is entirely nihilistic-though without modifying the essentially religious character of the process. Benjamin notes: 'Allegory goes away empty-handed. Evil as such, which it cherished as enduring profundity, exists only in allegory, is nothing but allegory, and means something different from what it is. It means precisely the non-existence of what it presents.' And equally perceptive is Benjamin's insight that it is 'the theological essence of the subject' that is here expressed.9 And this subjectivity, whose creativity has exceeded all bounds and arrived at the point of self-destruction, has a mode of receptivity corresponding to it. Here too, Benjamin's unremitting rigour provides the essential commentary: For the only diversion the melancholic permits himself, and it is a powerful one, is allegory.'10 Benjamin is much too precise a stylist for us to be able to ignore the pejorative undertones implicit in his use of the word 'diversion'. Where the world of objects is no longer taken seriously, the seriousness of the world of the subject must vanish with it.



On Bertolt Brecht

1

In the realm of aesthetics, the way a thing is expressed is of a qualitatively different order from what it would be in science. No one will deny that even in science a statement can be made in a clear or confused, an elegant or a laboured manner, etc., and that depending on this the method of presentation can accelerate, impede or retard the acceptance of novel ideas. But it would be misguided to see in this any justification for the sort of analogy between science and aesthetics often put forward nowadays, as a reaction to works of art lacking in content and appealing solely to the feelings. The aestheticization of science and philosophy in the Romantic movement, and again at the end of the nineteenth century, sprang from diametrically opposed motives, but begs the actual question in similar manner. The view dominant today is expressed as follows by Bertolt \(\frac{1}{2} \) Brecht in his Short Organon for the Theatre: 'Today it would even be possible to compile an aesthetics of the exact sciences. Galileo himself already spoke of the elegance of certain formulae, and of experiments as having a witty point. Einstein suggests that the sense of beauty has a function in scientific discovery. And the nuclear physicist Robert Oppenheimer praises the scientific attitude because "it has its own kind of beauty and appears highly appropriate to man's position on earth".'11

[■] Ibid. p. 233

[™] Ibid. p. 185

¹¹ Bertolt Brecht, Vermele, 12, Berlin 1953, p 110

between form and content in aesthetics. For if they are taken to their logical conclusion—something which Brecht fortunately avoids, for the most part, in his mature works—they result in a conception of content in art as something essentially distinct from form. As a result, form would be degraded to the level of something with a genuine use, but ultimately of secondary importance. However, it is evident—and this is confirmed in its essentials by Brecht's own practice—that artistic expression and aesthetic content are inseparable. Even where the content is profoundly intellectual, as in the philosophical poems of Goethe or Schiller or in the late painting of Rembrandt, etc., we find ourselves unable to make a meaningful aesthetic distinction between the two. The intellectual profundity of such works is actually constituted by those particular words or that particular arrangement of light and dark. Even to change the sequence of words or tonal nuances of the colours would transform depth into triviality.

In contrast to this, the content of the theories of Einstein or Galileo can only gain or lose in value if their grasp of the facts of the matter, as these exist independently of consciousness, is affected by the simplicity or complexity of their arguments, or by the greater or lesser incisiveness with which they are expressed. The content of a work of art—however intellectual—does not just consist in such a relationship to things in themselves, even though this may form an essential aspect of the work as a totality. It entails also a personal response to the factual complex it reflects and from which it is inseparable. Whether that response be one of tragic shock, optimistic acceptance or ironical criticism, etc., carries as much weight as the thought content itself. Nor does such a response abolish the work's objectivity; it merely gives it new emphasis. What counts is the importance of both the content and the response it elicits for the development of mankind and the way in which both can become the property of humanity.

II

We are concerned here with the much-debated 'alienation effect' of Bertolt Brecht. He defines this effect as follows: 'A representation that alienates is one which allows us to recognize its subject but at the same time makes it appear strange.' This is enough to make it clear that Brecht ultimately has the same thing in mind as is referred to in our own concept of generalization [Verallgemeinerung]. There is, however, one important, or at least would-be important difference. Brecht is out to discover a revolutionary theatre, that is to say, one in which an actual performance will inspire the audience to revolutionary activity. From this standpoint he criticizes not only the existing theatre, but the entire dramatic tradition. 'The theatre as we know it shows the structure of society (portrayed on the stage) as incapable of being influenced by society (in the auditorium).'13

¹⁸ Short Organos for the Theatre, §42

¹³ Tbid. §33.

in world literature do, in fact, depict essential social changes. Examples are the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy in Aeschylus, the breakdown of mediaeval feudalism in Shakespeare, the collapse of bourgeois society in Chekhov and Gorki, and in the case of the latter we even see the emerging new social forces coming on to the stage. And even when Brecht argues that 'Things that have long remained unchanged, appear unchangeable', 'A this may seem very cogent at first sight, but it is not in fact confirmed by the history of drama. Ostrovsky's Storm or Hebbel's Maria Magdalana depict worlds which have long remained unchanged. But Dobrolyubov's outstanding analysis demonstrates that it is this very fact that is responsible for the revolutionary impact of Ostrovsky's tragedy. 18

Brecht goes on to use the sentence we have just quoted as a weapon against theatre and drama as it has existed hitherto, and calls for a theatre which 'must amaze its public, and this can be achieved by making the familiar appear alien'. 16 But this is mere shadow-boxing. Even without alienation effects, writers have succeeded not just in surprising the audience, but in moving them profoundly by dramatizing the contradictions of a given social order. Chekhov, a major dramatist of a past epoch which extended right into the present, shows that it is perfectly possible to realize what is poetically rational in Brecht's programme without recourse to alienation effects. His plays are built on the conflict between the subjective intentions of his characters and their objective tendencies and significance. This constantly creates a divided impression in the minds of the audience. On the one hand, they understand the characters' feelings and can even sympathize with them. At the same time, they are forced into an intense experience of the tragic, tragi-comic or comic conflict between these subjective feelings and the objective social reality. It could be said that the whole of his drama is one single alienation effect; but, by that very token, its form makes it drama and not alienation effect.

We may add that Brecht's later, major dramas themselves—in conflict with his own programme—trigger off 'traditional' emotional reactions; and that they achieve their revolutionary impact despite the alienation effect, which acts as a disruptive and inhibiting factor, rather than a beneficial one. To realize this is to come close to the roots of the theoretical error committed by this important poet and playwright, and enables us to throw light on the general problem at issue. The source of the alienation effect is to be found in the embittered and one-sided polemics which Brecht conducts against 'empathy theory', even at the cost of obscuring historical facts and interconnections. In our earlier discussion of ornamental art, we have already encountered a similar antipathy on the part of Worringer. Of course, it would be wrong to equate his polemic with Brecht's. Worringer launched an attack on empathy theory from the right, in the name of a reactionary irrationalism; whereas Brecht does so from the left, in the name of socialist revolution.

⁴ Tbid. \$44.

¹⁴ Dobrolyubov, Augumabite philasephische Schriften, Moscow 1949, pp. 194 ff.

¹⁶ Brecht, op. cit \$44.

humanity and life. His mature artistic practice, therefore, and the immediate artistic insights resulting from this, become increasingly opposed to the fashionable but narrow antinomy [of abstraction and empathy].

For example, he regards the technique used in his Galileo as 'opportunistic'. But at the same time he gets the essential issue right when he treats his new play as the antithesis of the earlier parables. 17 'In the former, ideas are made incarnate; in the latter, a specific subject-matter gives birth to certain ideas.' This really implies the abandonment of the entire theory of the didactic drama (Labrstrick). The 'opportunism' of his new play, and the authentic dramatic representation we find in it (as well as in the other great works of his later period), come into focus in a way that is theoretically inconsistent, but is highly rewarding from a dramatic and poetic point of view. It does credit to Brecht's grasp of theory that he is able to perceive the deeply problematic character of epic theatre. As he writes in his diary (in March 1941), It is quite clear to me that we have to get away from the antagonism between reason and feeling.' Henceforth, the alienation effect should no longer prevent an emotional reaction, but should be concerned to provoke the right responses. 18 But Brecht fails to notice that these remarks, far from making concessions to empathy theory, in fact dispose of it completely.

For all that, Brecht and Worringer share one misconception. They both confuse 'empathy' with the theory and practice of the great epochs of European realism. Both fail to see that empathy is a specific Philistine theory of art, which may indeed define certain ideological aspects of the art of its own age, but which is prevented by its superficial character from doing justice even to its own important artistic monuments.10 Without attempting to give a full description of the theory at this point, I would only observe that this is the theory which gives rise to that vague and entirely passive response to works of art for which Brecht rightly feels such profound contempt. On the other hand, however, since the great art of the past is the reflection of reality, it is rigorously opposed to empathy of any kind. We can 'empathize' with something whose objective nature is wholly unknown or a matter of indifference to us; but when confronted with an evident reality or its correct representation, we can only be beguiled into the sort of re-experiencing which includes the awareness that we are responding not to our own subjectivity, but to a 'world' independent of it.

The specificity of an experience which directly concerns you, 'the resident', is to be found precisely in this duality which distinguishes a felt reality from empathy and from introjection. To be aware of the

17 Such as The Measures Taken, The Exception and the Rule, etc [Trans.]

¹⁸ Quoted from the essay by Ernst Schumacher, 'Brechts Galiles. Form and Empathy', Simu and Form 1960, No. IV, pp. 510 ff. and 522 ff.

¹⁸ I have given an analysis of the essential contents of this theory in my account of F Th. Vischer, who was in fact its progenitor (although the term empathy stems from his son, Robert) Vischer's summary of the core of the theory is this: 'Intuition in its ideal form reads note the object [scheet in day Object bissen] something it does not possess.' See Georg Lukács, Beitrage zar Geschichte der Arthetick, Berlin 1954, pp 263 ff.

Faust can never do so. The misleading concept of the 'alienation effect' comes into being because Brecht's passionate, but one-sided polemic induces him to succumb to this modern prejudice. One consequence of this is that the necessary process of generalization runs the risk of excessive conceptualization, of being converted from Signal System 1' to Signal System 2.20 A further consequence is that what we have earlier described in detail as the subsequent 'effect' [Nachber] of the receptive aesthetic experience is introduced into the structure of the work itself, and this factor reinforces the above-mentioned tendency.

111

[As in the case of Thomas Mann], it would be a formalistic error to include Bertolt Brecht in the ranks of avant-gardism merely because of his theory of the 'alienation effect'. We have already conducted a polemic against this concept elsewhere. What we would like to establish here is that the basic intention of the alienation effect is diametrically opposed to avant-gardism. In particular, it contains no trace of conformism, however well-hidden. On the contrary, its very purpose is to jolt people out of the false sense of security which frequently arises from their failure to see through the surface of existence to which they have become habituated. it His aim, instead, is to provide their minds and actions with the signposts that will enable them to perceive the true nature of reality, and the right. way to alter it. The reality whose existence avant-gardism denies, and which it strives to destroy aesthetically, is the starting-point and goal of the alienation effect. It is true enough that Brecht too began his career as a dramatist with allegory. But although the products of his first period were allegories, they never inhabited a merely subjective void. Quite the reverse, they were allegories by virtue of an all-too-direct passion for immediate, direct social action. And with greater maturity, this insistence on the all-too-immediate gradually diminished. He wrote powerful plays—despite the alienation effect—plays whose underlying themes are dramatized in a way that raises them to true poetic greatness. Such counter-movements are much feebler in contemporary painting and sculpture. One of the tasks facing historical-materialist research will be to show why the trend towards realism breaks off almost completely with Cezanne and Van Gogh, and why such great talents as Matisse, and such powerful creative geniuses as Picasso, so frequently become bogged down in problematic experiments.

Translated by Rodney Lavingstone

Lukács's argument here takes its lead from Pavlovian psychology Pavlov had distinguished between the first-order signals of animals which result from immediate perceptions as mediated by the reflex action of the central nervous system (Signal System 1), ~ and the system of second-order signals as constituted by the language of human beings (Signal System 2). Lukács accepts the Pavlovian theory in the modified form. In an attempt to distinguish between artists and thinkers, Pavlov had included the former in Signal System 1 Lukács, however, rejects an approach which reduces artists and the psychology of art to the conditioned reflex. Instead, basing himself on an analysis of work, he proposes a third system, Signal System 1', to denote the realm of the imagination which occupies a space between immediate perception and the concepts of language [Trans.]

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COTYLTYLUTLLCALLOTLS

On an Aside by Eagleton

4

It is always more difficult to criticize a publishing journal than a book or article; even so, Terry Eagleton's remarks on Screen (NLR 107) are not adequate to the rigour and seriousness of that journal's project. Essentially, Eagleton reproaches Screen with formalism. More than merely the willingness to study form is needed for this criticism to stick. Like other 'isms' (economism, theoreticism), the term implies the error of overtotalizing, and so an excessive concern with form as central or exclusive determinant (it is thus a precise definition of the Russian Formalists).

For Eagleton, Screen's formalism is firstly an excessive concern with techniques of production whose supposedly radical programme presumes that 'films which draw your attention to the camera thereby impel you out inexorably onto the picket lines'. Screen has disavowed such technical formalism with some consistency Colin MacCabe (Screen Vol. 17, No. 3, p. 21) refers to the notion that 'the breaking of the imaginary relationship can constitute a political goal in itself' as 'the ultra-leftish fantasy of the surrealists', and associates it with certain formulations of the Tel Quel group. Again, in the same issue, Stephen Heath condemns deconstruction based on the notion of 'film as film' as representing 'the impasse of formal device' in 'an aesthetics of transgression', and urges instead work which will bear little resemblance to the officially acknowledged avant-garde (p. 109).

Screen has been less concerned with the technical forms of film or its ideological 'theme' ('content analysis') than with its ideological 'form' or operation, that is, the articulation of codes of image (mimetic representation of visual space) and of the arrangement of film in sequences (the novelistic development of narrative) constituting the 'classic realism' of cinema. Such formal codes are not, of course, metaphysical; they are a really existent discursive materiality, and as such an object to be constructed as knowledge in an appropriate theory (a theory of signifying practice); and further, an object it has been conjuncturally impartant to construct, since formal codes are a necessary condition for ideological 'theme' and are presupposed—often without question—by conventional 'content analysis'. As instituted form, realism is ideological not merely in repressing traces of production (as Eagleton mentions), but in promoting the homogeneity of realism's 'narrative space' which acts to preclude contradiction. As instituted form, realism is historical in being one of the forms (with harmony in music, jambic pentameter in English poetry) produced with the capitalist era, and so what may be termed an spechal form. It is only for those positioned within the contradictions of late

suggests; and there seems no inherent reason why realism should not finally become superseded, just as realism by the end of the seventeenth century had fully replaced allegory, the typical form of feudalism. As an epochal form, realism has appropriately been investigated by Serem back to its origins in Quattrocento perspective. Serem has also proposed a historical framework in analysing film as apperfix signifying practice, that is the practice of Hollywood, and so Hollywood realism as a 'machine' of representations instituted both ideologically and industrially.

What Screen has not so far developed is historical study of film in its immediate conjuncture. The obstacle to this does not, I think, inhere in any of Screen's theoretical assumptions or in the logic of its project, nor has Eagleton's demonstrated that it does; it is rather the present lack of an adequate theory for thinking the relation between signifying practice and conjuncture, and the consequent danger of falling (back) into impressionism.

Anthony Easthope

Acknowledgements

Hans-Magnus Enzensberger's 'Zwei Randbemerkungen zum Weltuntergang' appeared i Kursburb No. 52, May 1978; Henri Weber's article in Dialactiques No. 22, Winter 1977; it Jacqueline Heinen's ceasy in Critique Communité No. 20/21, December 1977—January 19—1. All are translated here with thanks.